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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



"OH, ARTHUR! SAVE ME, SAVE ME!" SHE CRIED.

AN UNWILLING VENGEANCE.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome had pitched its tent—a very large one, representing a great deal of canvas—at Fairleigh, a dull little country town in Essex.

It was to remain there a week, neither more nor less. Great red and yellow posters had announced this important fact to the inhabitants of Fairleigh for many days past.

The strait-laced section had duly pronounced against the circus as dangerous to morality; one dissenting minister had indeed launched invective at it from his little paper-box of a pulpit, while the lenient, easy-going folks, always in the majority, had decided to patronise Burlington's, and allow themselves a pleasant evening.

"Just to give the children a treat," of course. They hadn't the least desire to go to the circus on their own account—not they.

Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome was known to be one of the best then travelling throughout the country. All the local magnates had promised to patronise it on the third night of its stay at Fairleigh.

There was a special rehearsal that afternoon, to ensure everyone being well up in his or her part.

Chinese lanterns, flags, evergreens, were disposed about the large canvas building to give it a festive appearance.

The grooms, to appear later on with shining faces and scarlet jackets, were hard at work in their shirt-sleeves under the vigilant superintendence of the circus proprietor, Ralph Burlington.

"What the dickens are you up to there, you fool!" shouted this gentleman, angrily, to the young fellow who was arranging the Chinese lanterns. "You've hung that just where it's

most likely to be knocked down, and fall on the people in the pit. Put it higher up." Then, turning sharply round, "Have those hoops been covered with paper yet? Oh, no; of course not. Everything left till the last moment, as usual. Get that net stretched at once, and have fresh sawdust thrown down as soon as the riding is over. I shall be back again in half-an-hour to see that it is done, and done properly."

Kicking the clown's dog, which had got between his legs, out of the way, Ralph Burlington strode from the ring, an ominous frown upon his face, a strong desire to quarrel with somebody uppermost in his mind.

The circus proprietor was a tall, stalwart man of fifty, with a swarthy face, strongly-marked features, keen and rather protuberant dark eyes, a square, massive chin, and straight, dark hair worn rather long—a coarse-natured man, with a powerful will and plenty of executive ability. A man who was polite to his superiors, off-hand civil to his equals, and tyrannical to his inferiors, especially those in his employ.

The latter he bullied incessantly, and worked hard, treating them without the least consideration of kindness, earning in return their cordial hatred.

Everyone connected with the circus detested Ralph Burlington, and would have welcomed any circumstance likely to injure or humiliate him.

Hard, strong, proud, not without mental power of a certain kind, he kept them all at a distance, as it were, maintaining an unassailable position, while controlling the little army of professionals, grooms, and stable-helpers in his employ with a severity, and at times a tyranny, that frequently led to revolt.

They deemed him invulnerable, a man without gentler feelings or human weakness of any kind to redeem his cruel nature.

The only thing to be said in his favour was that he paid good salaries to clever artistes, good wages to those lower down in the scale, and who felt the weight of his authority most.

He was in a worse temper than usual to-day, something special having occurred to annoy him. On the previous night, Sally, one of the performing elephants, had broken loose without being detected, and gone "on the rampage."

Shambling down a country lane she had frightened a woman almost into fits. Going up to a farmhouse she had broken in the window of a room where the farmer and his family were at supper. Not liking the look of the uninvited guest they had promptly fled. Sally, nothing daunted, had introduced her head and trunk through the broken window and promptly cleared the table afterwards, with malicious propensity, sweeping all that was breakable off it on to the floor.

Ralph Burlington would have to make good the damage done by this lively Sally, and the knowledge in no wise tended to improve his temper.

As he went out he encountered a young man, one of the professionals, in the act of entering the circus, cigar in mouth. Ralph Burlington's heavy brow lowered; he grasped the riding whip that he carried more firmly, as the other regarded him with a glance of cool defiance.

"You'd better not keep the audience waiting to-night, Mr. Glyndon, as you did a week ago at Dallborough," he said, roughly. "I don't stand any more of that nonsense."

"I was behind time once by a matter of five minutes," replied Glyndon, easily, "and you have not failed to make capital out of the incident, Mr. Burlington."

"It will be to your interest not to repeat it," said the circus-master, an angry gleam, a danger light, shining in his dark eyes. "I don't suppose," with a strident, insulting laugh, "that you are in the habit of dining late!"

"No," said the other man, in a tone that was amused, supercilious, indifferent, anything but angry. "I renounced that habit when I ceased to associate with gentlemen. I follow your example, Mr. Burlington, by dining early."

"Do you wish to insult me, sir?" demanded Ralph Burlington, threateningly.

"Certainly not: last thing in my thoughts," said Arthur Glyndon, languidly elevating his eyebrows. "Insult my employer! I wouldn't be guilty of such an unpardonable act. You asked me a question, and I gave you an answer—that is all."

Ralph Burlington scowled at him, and swore under his breath. Ballying and abuse were quite in his line; he might have taken a "double first" in either; but the light sarcasm, the pointed speeches in which this young man indulged were beyond him, and irritated him sorely. He was at a disadvantage, because he could not fight Glyndon with his own weapons.

"Mind that you are not late to-night, sir—that you give me no cause to find fault with you," he reiterated, as he turned to go; "if you do you'll repent it."

Without waiting for an answer he disappeared beneath the canvas doorway, Arthur Glyndon going inside towards the ring, where a groom stood holding a beautiful black mare in readiness for him.

Tall, athletic, well set-up, Glyndon was accounted by the ladies of the circus a very hand-

some man. His dark brown hair fell in short waves over a broad, white forehead. He had clear-cut, aristocratic features, eloquent dark blue eyes, and a thick moustache. He could not have been more than thirty, yet the lines round his mouth and under his eyes betokened hard living in the past, while the bitter, reckless tone that pervaded nearly all he said went to prove that he was still reaping in a very plentiful harvest of wild oats, sown in his younger days.

He had joined the circus six months before with a highly-trained performing horse called Lady Jane. Glyndon's clever mare, trained by himself, had become a prominent and popular feature in the entertainment. Ralph Burlington could not afford to send the horse and its owner adrift, much as he hated the latter.

That Arthur Glyndon was no ordinary circus-performer even the grooms felt certain. There was about him, betraying itself in voice and bearing, that indefinable air of good-breeding which marks the gentleman.

He was invariably courteous to the women connected with the circus, always ready to render them any little friendly service, and they liked him immensely. With the men he was genial and pleasant, while maintaining a strict reserve as to his own past. On the whole he was a favourite with all save Ralph Burlington.

That gentleman hated him, because of his unconscious superiority and good breeding, which seemed like a perpetual rebuke to his own coarseness. Moreover, Glyndon had ventured to resent his bullying, hectoring manner, to give him as good as he sent, only in different terms.

The young man's sarcastic speeches, his lightly-veiled contempt for his employer, had stung the latter almost to madness, and rendered him more bent upon insulting and ill-treating Glyndon by way of revenge.

"The governor's got his knife into Glyndon," remarked little Jimmy Waters, the clown, one day; "and Glyndon's got a spirit that won't let him stand as much as we do. There'll be a scrape between those two, sooner or later worth seeing—you mark my words."

"I hope Glyndon will get the best of it, then, and give that old curmudgeon a sound kicking," replied Signor Tito Pisanini, otherwise plain Jack Robinson, whose daring trapeze performance caused a sensation nightly.

Unfortunately thus far Ralph Burlington had got decidedly the best of it. A loan of ten pounds, solicited in order to pay a pressing creditor, had given him an advantage over Arthur Glyndon ere the latter had been with him a month. Glyndon was too poor to refund the money, for which Lady Jane stood security.

If he left the circus he must leave his performing horse behind, and himself without the means of obtaining a living. Lady Jane was worth seventy guineas, yet he could not claim her until that paltry sum was paid.

He stayed on consequently, enduring Ralph Burlington's coarse, insulting manner as well as he could, not unfrequently turning the tables upon him, and causing him to appear ridiculous in the eyes of his employés, since his power of repartee, his early training rendered him in one sense at least Burlington's master.

Nevertheless, in his heart, Arthur Glyndon writhed beneath the daily slights and insults dealt out to him, and longed for a day of reckoning to arrive.

That he should have sunk so low as to be at the mercy of such a coarse brute as Burlington was gall and wormwood to him. Oh! if he could but raise sufficient money to redeem Lady Jane and quit the circus after settling affairs with its master, and avenging each studied indignity received!

Much as he hated Ralph Burlington, Glyndon always kept his temper in any colloquy between them, because he knew that it was the best way to make the circus-master lose his.

That air of cool superiority chafed Ralph far more than any outburst of passion. None the less, beneath the calm exterior the fire was smouldering, and might blaze up in sudden resentment at any moment.

Lady Jane acquitted herself well that afternoon at rehearsal, and Glyndon rewarded her

with some oranges which he had brought with him.

"Good old girl, splendid old beauty!" he murmured, while stroking Lady Jane's glossy arched neck. "How I wish we were free to leave this cursed place at an hour's notice! And yet, if the chance were mine, I wouldn't avail myself of it till I had a settling with that low-bred hound who has rendered my life a burden to me for the last five months. Revenge, that is what I want: it would be sweeter even than liberty, and, by Jove, I'll have it as long, whatever I pay for it! He shall learn that I am not to be insulted with impunity."

He set his teeth hard as he spoke, and his dark blue eyes shone with angry light. Evidently Arthur Glyndon had deep and undisciplined passions at work within his breast, subject only to a surface control.

Lady Jane, blissfully ignorant of human woes, rubbed her beautiful head carelessly against her master's cheek. A strong attachment existed between the pair, and Glyndon patted and purred her now before handing her over to the groom in attendance.

The interior of the circus looked very bright and attractive that night when the doors were opened. It was brilliantly lighted, while that peculiar aroma of sawdust and orange-peel, inseparable from a circus, pervaded everything not unpleasantly.

From the best crimson-covered seats to the stumpy gallery the structure was crowded. The mayor and corporation of Fairleigh, received upon their entry by Ralph Burlington's person, occupied a prominent position. Children's eyes, bright with expectation, were fixed upon the curtained doorway from behind which so many wonders were presently to issue.

The band struck up a lively dance-tune, the curtain veiling the wide doorway was drawn aside, a cream-coloured horse with a large flat saddle on his back, trotted into the ring, followed by Jimmy Waters the clown, grotesquely attired, with a whole battery of new jokes to fire off, after he had stood upon his head, and saluted the audience in that inverted attitude, with the "Here we are again," that never fails to evoke a roar of laughter.

Then, led by the ring-master, a pretty child clad in airy skirts of pink and white looped with flowers, came into the ring, and making her bow, took a preliminary canter before going through the hoops and banners prepared for her.

Her performance was followed by some clever acrobatic business by two brothers—dark skinned fellows, without an ounce of superfluous flesh about them. Then came Arthur Glyndon's turn with Lady Jane. As he entered the ring, and made his bow to the audience, the beautiful glossy mare following him, a frown rested upon Ralph Burlington's face.

"The boss is in a nice temper to-night," whispered one groom to another. "If anybody is unlucky enough to miss his mark, he'll catch it, I'm thinking."

For some reason, although the rehearsal had been satisfactory, Lady Jane went through her performance very badly for once. Perhaps the proverbial fickleness of her sex had something to do with it. An unusual display being required of her, she chose to be seen at her worst. In several well-known tricks she broke down, and was slow to obey the word of command.

Arthur Glyndon lost his temper, and applied the whip more sharply than usual. Lady Jane's high spirit resented this treatment. She lashed out vigorously with her hind legs, and the applause which followed her disappearance was of a very qualified nature.

Purple with rage, Ralph Burlington followed Glyndon to the dressing-tent.

"That disgraceful performance was your fault—not the mare's," he shouted. "You planned it for to-night in order to annoy me—to bring discredit upon the circus, you scoundrel! It would serve you right if I were to horsewhip you soundly."

Arthur Glyndon faced him with compressed lips and eyes that flashed fire.

"You lie," he said, sternly. "I am not responsible for the mare's failure to-night. It

annoyed me as much as it did you. It was not a planned thing. When I wish to punish a man for having insulted me I go to work in a more straightforward style, Mr. Burlington."

"As if I should take your word," sneered the circus-master. "I was a fool to have anything to do with you in the first instance, when you came to me entirely without credentials. You may be a thief, a forger, a murderer, for all your fine gentlemen airs. Honest men are not so anxious to keep their past history a profound secret. Your broken-down gentleman is, as a rule, the biggest blackguard hanging!"

"After giving you due precedence, you mean," corrected Glyndon. "What a pity it would be to rob you of your prerogative."

Completely carried away by passion, Ralph lifted his hand and dealt the younger man a blow that felled him to the ground.

In a second he was upon his feet again, rushing at his assailant. But half a score of men held him back, uttering well-meant remonstrances, while openly condemning Ralph Burlington's conduct in striking that cowardly blow.

Aware that he had gone rather too far, the proprietor went back to the circus, leaving Arthur Glyndon surrounded by a crowd of sympathisers.

CHAPTER II.

He soon shook them off, however. His outraged manhood resented anything in the shape of pity.

It only seemed to deepen the humiliation he endured. Leaving the dressing-tent, in and out of which male artistes in tights, and velvet, and spangles, were constantly popping, Arthur Glyndon roamed off to the stables, his cheek still burning and tingling from that shameful blow, his heart well-nigh bursting with rage and bitterness.

"I wonder what the end of this affair will be like!" said one of the men when he was gone.

"Glyndon will get the sack after to-night's business," said another, "not that he's the one in fault. Burlington has treated him shamefully for months past—just as if he'd a special spite against the fellow for being a bit of a swell, and refusing to be bullied like the rest of us!"

"I fancy he'd be afraid to keep Glyndon on, even if he were willing to stay," interposed a third, "but for our interference the governor would have got what he richly deserves, a thrashing, just now. Glyndon's blood is up and he won't pocket that insult quietly or forget the blow that followed it. Why should he?"

"Why, indeed!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Arnadine Montmorenel, the pretty, dark-eyed, dark-haired girl who rode the bare-backed horse, and who had run round, upon hearing high words, to know what was amiss. "I hope Mr. Glyndon will punish that monster and give him a lesson that he won't soon forget. Poor fellow, to abuse him and knock him down for what he couldn't help! The mare was in a bad temper to-night, I saw that at once, and Ralph Burlington might have seen it had he wished to. I believe he hates Mr. Glyndon for being so superior to him in every way. Where is he now?"

"Who! Glyndon!"

"Yes."

"Somewhere about the place. He wouldn't stay with us. He's not a fellow to say much, whatever he may feel. I wonder what he means doing?"

"If he goes away he can't take the mare with him," said one of the acrobats. "Burlington's advanced him some money on it, and Glyndon will have to repay that before he's free to claim the animal. It's deuced hard on him all round, poor beggar."

"If I'd got the money I'd lend it to him, that I would," said Mdlle. Arnadine, impulsively. "It's a mercy that Ralph Burlington keeps single. A nice time any poor woman would have of it as his wife—the wretch!"

"Is he a bachelor?" asked a man almost new to the circus, and those connected with it.

"Yes; at least we've never heard of his having

anybody belonging to him," replied the girl. "He isn't the sort of man to feel the want of them; he's made of cast-iron, and he's got no human feeling in him."

"Nature shaped him in a queer mould," interposed Johnny Waters, fresh from the ring, and the laughter he had excited there.

"I hope she broke it afterwards to avoid turning out any more of the same sort—one's enough," laughed Mdlle. Arnadine, as she ran quickly into the circus upon hearing her name called.

Meanwhile Arthur Glyndon was standing by Lady Jane in the quiet, dark stable, his face crushed against her sleek neck, oblivious of her late shortcomings that had cost him so dear—oblivious of all save the blow he had received, and the burning desire that possessed him to punish the man who had dealt it.

He was near enough to the circus to hear the lively music, the frequent bursts of laughter, and the applause proceeding from within. They jarred horribly upon him as he stood there, miserable, vindictive, full of rage, yet powerless to avenge himself against the man who had treated him so shamefully.

Never again would he enter that ring. Rather would he go away, leaving Lady Jane behind until he could redeem her. Yes, Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome should know him no more; yet if he were to retain his self-respect that blow must be wiped out, those insults extending over several months duly acknowledged and requited, ere he took his departure.

To thrash Ralph Burlington within an inch of his life when others were not present to intervene between them. It seemed but a poor, unsatisfactory revenge, a transient punishment, after all. In a few days the circus-master would have recovered from its effects, while he, Arthur Glyndon, might be cooling his heels in prison as the price of what he had done.

To wound the circus-master's heart, if he possessed one, rather than his flesh, to embitter his whole life, to lower his pride and arrogance permanently—this was the retribution for which Arthur Glyndon longed, yet how could he obtain it?

"If he were but vulnerable," exclaimed the young man aloud; "if there were but a soft spot, a weakness, a passion about him through which I might strike and inflict a deadly wound, it would be a vengeance worth having. Ralph Burlington, however, cares for neither man, woman, nor child."

Lady Jane, as if anxious to atone for her recent bad behaviour, rubbed her head coquettishly against Arthur Glyndon's shoulder, and sought to attract his attention. But he disregarded these overtures on the part of his favourite; his mind was too busy with the scene in which he had figured so conspicuously half-an-hour ago.

"Why, Glyndon, old man, what are you doing here, all by yourself in the dark?" said a cheery voice breaking in upon his reverie, as Charlie Becker, the Shakespearian clown, in cap and bells, and pointed many-coloured doublet, entered the stable, having finished his turn in the ring, and given place again to Jimmy Waters.

"I suppose I can stop here if I please without asking permission!" retorted Glyndon, haughtily.

"How now, what's the matter? Since I came hither I have heard strange news," spouted Charlie, quoting from *King Lear*. "Don't be so rusty with me, old fellow. I'm not responsible for Burlington's doings, you know. I was awfully sorry to hear that you and he had had a row."

"He has insulted me foully in the presence of others," said Arthur Glyndon from between his clenched teeth; "and some day he shall bitterly repent having done so."

"He's a hard nail," rejoined the clown, leaning against Lady Jane, one arm thrown carelessly across her, as he spoke; "cruelly hard, where he dare be. He takes advantage of his position as master to make it hot for us all. After this you'll be going, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Glyndon, shortly. "But Ralph Burlington shall have good cause to remember me later on."

"Take my advice, Glyndon, since it's well

meant, and don't get yourself into worse trouble by trying to retaliate upon Burlington," rejoined Charlie Becker, giving his head a little shake, that made the bells on his cap ring again. "If it's only a fool's advice it's worth having. In this world might gets the upper hand of right too often. Burlington has behaved very badly to you—very badly—but he's got the position and the money. Any attempt to injure him will only recoil on yourself."

But Glyndon was in a mood to resent advice of any kind.

"I know how to manage my own affairs, thank you, without any interference," he said. "You and I have always been on good terms, however, with each other, Becker. We may as well shake hands and part friends, since we are not likely to meet again after to-night."

"If a trifle of money would help you," said the clown, "why, I should be glad to—"

"Thanks, old fellow; you're very kind, but I've enough for present necessities," replied Glyndon, touched by the other's generosity. "I daresay I shall soon meet with an engagement of some kind, good, bad, or indifferent."

"And the mare?"

"Must remain here until I can repay the money lent to me by Burlington. I am going to ask you a favour, Becker. Will you look to her, now and then, and ensure her being kindly treated when I am gone?"

"That I will, but she won't perform half so well with anyone else as with you; and how will you obtain an engagement without her?"

"Oh, I've had more than enough of circus life already!" exclaimed Glyndon. "I shall go in for some other line."

"By-the-by, you were wrong in that remark made to yourself as I entered the stable just now," the clown went on.

"What remark?"

"You said Ralph Burlington cared for neither man, woman, or child! Now, I happen to know he cares a great deal for one woman or girl rather—his daughter."

"His daughter?" repeated Glyndon. "I was not aware that he had one."

"Very few people are aware of the fact," said Charlie, jumping up on to Lady Jane's back, and seating himself there comfortably. "I found it out for myself. Burlington doesn't know that his secret is no secret to me. There's no special reason why I should keep it."

"Is he ashamed to own her?" asked Arthur Glyndon.

"No, oh dear no; quite the reverse. He's afraid that she would be ashamed to own him if she knew the nature of his profession. He's had her brought up amongst the daughters of titled people, in tip-top style. He's given her to understand that he's—ha!—ha!—a gentleman of good family and independent means, always travelling about for the benefit of his health. She's no more idea that her dad is only a circus-proprietor than—than this horse!"

"How did you become acquainted with these domestic details, pray?" said Arthur Glyndon, listening intently, with a set concentrated expression on his face in the darkness.

"Well, to begin with, I've travelled with this circus for several years now. No professional has stayed so long with Burlington as I have done. I'm pretty well seasoned to his bullying by this time; he knows in my case it's like pouring water on a duck's back. It struck me as odd a year or two ago, that he should always disappear in the summer at precisely the same date for a fortnight, leaving Collins, the ring-master, in sole charge. I should never have discovered where he went to, though, but for receiving a telegram from my sister, who lives at Penwy, a dull little watering-place in Cornwall, asking me to come to her at once, as she was very ill. Burlington had started for his mysterious holiday—which he never made the least allusion to—on the previous day. I obtained leave of absence from Collins, however, and started at once for Penwy. When I got there my sister had taken a turn for the better—indeed, she soon recovered. I was taking a walk one day by the sea, thinking how precious dull everything was down there, when who should I descry on

ahead but Ralph Burlington and a young lady."

"Goon," said Arthur Glyndon impatiently, as the clown panted.

"I was surprised," said Charley, resuming his narrative. "So that's your little game, thinks I. Is it wife or sweetheart that you are walking with? I felt certain it couldn't be his wife because he was so attentive to her. Well, feeling thoroughly curious I made inquiries, found out at which hotel they were staying, and contrived to get on good terms with the young lady's maid. She told me her mistress's name was Eva Burlington, that she was being educated at a school or college near Leamington—Eversleigh College I think she called it—and that her father was a very wealthy gentleman, who always brought her down to Pansy to spend the summer holidays or part of them. The rest of the year he was abroad. A nice little tale that to be told to Burlington's clown!"

"And the girl has been brought up under a false impression!" said Arthur Glyndon, eagerly.

"Yes; she fancies she belongs to a regular swell family, and Burlington encourages the delusion. Now I know why the circus never by any chance goes to Leamington. It is that the name shan't lead to his being detected as a fraud by his own daughter, whom he loves dearly."

"Are you sure of all this? Is the maid in the secret?"

"Bless you, no; she believes Burlington to be a gentleman. I gained most of my information from a conversation overheard when lying amongst the rocks one fine morning. Burlington and the girl didn't see me. They came and sat within earshot, and I—well, I kept my ears wide open."

"What did you learn of any importance?"

"I gathered from what they said that Burlington had originally married a lady; that his wife had died soon after the birth of her child, and that Burlington's heart is set upon educating his daughter splendidly, and marrying her well later on to some titled swell. Ambitions, isn't it, for a circus proprietor? But he's made a lot of money. She thinks that he holds some berth under Government, which necessitates his frequent absence. She believes in him implicitly, and he—well—he idolizes her. You would hardly have recognised him, Glyndon, as they sat there together; he was so altered for the better. He spoke quite gently, and when the girl looked up in his face and made some laughing remark, he stooped down and kissed her. Fancy Ralph Burlington kissing anybody!"

"But, later on, when this young lady leaves school she must be undeceived."

"I fancy that Ralph will dispose of the circus before then," was the reply. "Circuses are not what they used to be. He'll take a big house somewhere, and install his daughter in it as mistress. That's my name called—I must be off. I don't know why I've told you all this, except to prove to you that Burlington is human, in spite of his brutal ways. Ta-ta, old fellow, see you again some day, I hope, and don't be down-hearted."

Sliding down from off Lady Jane's back, the clown disappeared, after grasping Arthur Glyndon's hand.

He was alone again, but with a definite aim in view, a settled purpose. The clown's story had supplied him with a clue, and he would follow it up, regardless of difficulties or hindrances in his desire to be avenged upon Ralph Burlington.

He felt no pity, no remorse, although his scheme, if carried out in its entirety, would punish the innocent as well as the guilty. Ralph's conduct had robbed him of all gentler feeling, leaving only that intense longing for retribution behind.

"To break his heart, to foil his most cherished plans, to wound him through his affection for this girl, who probably resembles him in disposition," muttered Glyndon; "we should be quite then, and I could afford to leave him in peace. The scheme is a wild one, and it may fail, but since there is no other open to me, at

least I will try it. Charley, old man, you have done me a good turn to-night."

After bestowing a parting careen upon Lady Jane, Arthur Glyndon left the vicinity of the circus, and went to his poor lodging. Packing his one portmanteau, he prepared to leave Fairleigh at once.

"I am not a bad looking fellow, and I can make myself agreeable when I please," he said, in a low tone, as he regarded his own reflection in the cracked glass, much as if he were criticising someone else, and without any spark of vanity, his manner being grim and business-like in the extreme. "Well, *qui vivit sperat*. I fancy, Ralph Burlington, there is trouble in store for you, *mon ami*."

He left Fairleigh by the midnight train, and his abrupt departure excited much comment among the circus people. Everybody pitied him, everybody united in blaming Ralph Burlington.

Burlington was rather relieved to think that he had got rid of the young man so easily while retaining possession of a valuable trained horse, upon which he had only a lien of ten pounds.

When his temper cooled down he had regretted that hasty blow, and thought it likely that Arthur Glyndon would summon him for the assault.

To find that he had gone off quietly, making no protest, not even claiming the small amount of money due to him, was, to say the least of it, satisfactory.

Ralph Burlington's satisfaction would have been short-lived, however, had it been possible for anyone to reveal to him the exact nature of the mission upon which the man so grossly insulted by him had gone away.

CHAPTER III.

EVERSLEIGH COLLEGE was a large, red-brick building on the outskirts of Leamington, standing in its own trimly-kept grounds.

A few years before it would have been called a select boarding school. Now, however, when the very cat's-meat man is a "purveyor of felicitous delicacies," and high-sounding titles are so much in request, it owned a more learned and imposing appellation.

Only the daughters of noblemen and good old families, girls enjoying blue blood and pedigree, were received as students at Eversleigh College.

The principal of it, Miss Minerva Lexicon, prided herself upon its select character. Ralph Burlington, wishing his daughter to be educated there, had done well to conceal his social status, to hoodwink Miss Minerva so effectually. Otherwise the girl would never have been allowed to pass those classic portals.

Everything was taught at Eversleigh College. To ordinary feminine accomplishments were added classics, mathematics, each known branch of science, callisthenics, and goodness only knows what besides.

Yet, somehow, in spite of the cramming and culture, the high pressure to which they were subjected, the "fair girl graduates" were still intensely human, taking a very strong interest in such a frivolous subject as dress, and a still stronger one in the equally frivolous subject of lovers.

Notes were sometimes smuggled into and out of college which had no bearing upon the studies conducted there; looks and occasionally words were interchanged out-of-doors between the girl students and possible lovers.

Miss Minerva Lexicon had her work cut out to keep them all in order, bawling over as they were with exuberant spirits, ready for either mischief or love—whichever came first.

Miss Minerva was a tall, thin, acidulated, elderly lady, who wore spectacles, and had all the "clogies" at her fingers' end.

She exercised great discretion in her choice of masters and governesses, the former being invariably elderly, and by no means interesting so far as personal appearance went—not by any means the sort of men with one of whom a romantic girl might wish to elope.

The drawing-master having fallen ill, however, shortly before an important examination, she had been compelled to break through her rule for once, and engage a much younger and decidedly handsome man, who had presented himself, for the time being, not without inward misgivings.

The new-comer was clever, though, and he had referred her to a well-known artist, who praised him highly, and went bail, as it were, for his efficiency and respectability.

By keeping a sharp look-out upon the drawing-master when his pupils were present, Miss Minerva hoped to avert any evil consequences.

Among the girls bending over their sketches one glorious spring morning was Eva Burlington, over whose shoulder the drawing-master frequently glanced to ascertain what progress she was making.

Ralph Burlington's only daughter was a slim, willow maiden of seventeen, with large, liquid, long-lashed, hazel eyes, full of warm, sunny light, golden hair twisted round her shapely little head in thick coils, piquant features and a complexion delicate as the inside of a seashell, a girl who promised to develop by-and-by into a very beautiful woman.

Eva Burlington was a favourite with all her fellow-students. *Riante*, mirthful, high-spirited, she was yet beneath that bright, thoughtless exterior, all fun and sparkle, extremely sensitive, unselfish, and lovable. Few of her companions guessed how deeply Eva could love, when once her heart was touched. They knew, though, that she had a rare fund of sympathy, a manner which fascinated all who came beneath its spell, and not a girl in the college disliked or avoided Eva Burlington.

She seemed to have inherited nothing of her father's arrogant, under-bred, coarse grained nature. In every sense of the word Eva was a lady—dainty, refined, lovely. She resembled the mother whose untimely death had perhaps helped to make Ralph Burlington so harsh and repellent to all around him save his daughter.

"Miss Burlington, that line denoting the horizon in your sketch is not quite even!" said the deep musical voice of the new drawing-master, "and these trees in the foreground require more shading."

Eva's fair face flushed, as she proceeded to carry out the drawing-master's instructions; the little white hand that held the pencil trembled slightly, and yet he had spoken in anything but a severe tone. Somehow his close vicinity always affected Eva strongly, sending electric thrills through her, rendering her at times wildly, foolishly happy, at others vaguely sad.

This drawing-master was a man little over thirty, with an aristocratic, handsome face, brown hair rippling over a broad, white forehead, and dark blue eyes. His name was Arthur Glyndon.

In coming to Leamington to work out if possible that wild scheme of vengeance against Ralph Burlington, suggested to him by the clown's story, Arthur Glyndon had scarcely dared to hope that it would prove successful, the odds being so terribly against him.

Chance, however, had favoured him wonderfully, as it does sometimes favour the desperate. The illness of the gentleman who taught drawing at Eversleigh College came under his notice ere he had been at Leamington two days.

Deeming this opportunity of making Eva Burlington's acquaintance too good to be lost, he had offered to fill the vacant post *pro tem*—a former college friend, now a rising artist, good-naturedly supplying him with the necessary credentials.

Both at school and at college Arthur Glyndon had been famous for his clever dashing pencil sketches.

A little practice had served to revive this neglected accomplishment, which, in Glyndon's case, required some toning-down to adapt it to the requirement of a young ladies' drawing-master.

Miss Minerva Lexicon, little dreaming that she was introducing a handsome wolf in sheep's clothing amidst her lambs, had duly engaged him, and Arthur Glyndon, in the course of a month or

two, felt that his revenge was in a fair way of being gratified.

Eva Burlington was not indifferent to him; of this he had assured himself already.

Cautiously, very cautiously, and by slow degrees, lest he should startle her or excite suspicion, he had given her to understand, more by look than word, that she was more to him than a pupil—that she and she alone was responsible for his being there at all. And Eva had fallen blithely into the snare spread for her.

Half-child, half-woman,—

"Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet."

Conscious of new forces and emotions stirring within her, of vague hopes and fears and longings which she could not define, Arthur Glyndon had given shape to them all, and taught her, too early, the meaning of love.

The few words he had contrived to whisper in her ear from time to time had excited her curiosity as well as her love.

Who could he be, this grave handsome man, who preferred her to all the others, who had come to Eversleigh, as he averred, that he might be near her and win her love? Perhaps a nobleman in disguise.

Eva's novel-reading had imbued her with some rather romantic notions, and she had no experience of the world to counterbalance their effect.

Already Arthur Glyndon was enthroned in her pure girlish heart as king and hero. No man half so interesting, half so handsome, had ever crossed her path before.

She trusted and believed in him implicitly, and in her case the attachment was likely to prove a lasting one, making or marring her happiness for life.

And Arthur Glyndon? The result he sought to compass, a cruel and unprincipled one, even allowing for the provocation he had received, was a secret marriage between Eva and himself.

To make her his wife, then to take her straight to her father, ruthlessly dispelling the delusion with regard to his profession which Ralph Burlington had been at such pains to maintain towards his daughter, while presenting himself to the circus-master under the unwelcome aspect of his son-in-law.

It was a cruel scheme of reprisal, because it involved the innocent as well as the guilty. But Arthur Glyndon had pledged himself to carry it out, and he never went back from his word. Burlington had insulted him grossly, and he should pay the penalty through his much-loved daughter.

Glyndon's strong passions and vindictive nature had always been against him; he had never sought to curb them. Otherwise, he would have continued to occupy a very different position to his present one.

When Ralph Burlington recognised in the husband of his daughter—for whom he had anticipated a title and a splendid match—a professional lately in his employ; when that daughter saw her father for the first time amidst his everyday surroundings in the circus, stripped of the surface refinement he assumed in her presence—loud, coarse, abusive, his real self—then, and only then, would Arthur Glyndon feel himself amply avenged.

At first he had been indifferent with regard to the girl herself, and what she might be like. Had she been plain, awkward, uninteresting, he would have sought to make her his wife just the same, in order to effect his purpose.

But, as she fell in readily with his plans, poor child; as he saw her day by day, beautiful, interesting, lovable, with no trace of her father about her, as her transparent, guileless nature unfolded itself for his inspection, he began to experience some remorse for the part he was playing.

Arthur Glyndon actually wished that Eva had resembled her father in disposition. Then he would have felt hardly any scruple in making her his wife, since the worst of the bargain would be his.

As it was he could hardly tell whether this fair, gentle, lovely girl was becoming unacceptably dear to him or not. He fought against the weakness stoutly, but still it remained.

He had flirted violently with many women, until now he had never been in love with one. Love! No, it must not, it dare not, be thought of in connection with Eva Burlington, and the vengeance he meditated.

He told himself this savagely, wondering what had come over him, yet he could not bring himself to hate Eva, or even feel indifferent to her, as at first.

Presently, as the drawing-lesson proceeded, he bent over her again, and taking the pencil from her hand wrote in minute characters on the margin of the sketch,—

"Meet me in the summer-house, at the back of the college, at six o'clock this evening. I have something to say to you there. Rub this out!"

Eva scribbled a rapid "Yes"; then with her India-rubber effaced the whole correspondence. No one had witnessed the transaction. Eva, as an advanced pupil, sat a little apart from the other girls; the governess in attendance merely supposed Mr. Glyndon to be giving her instructions—which he was, only not of the kind required by the lesson.

His request had filled Eva with mingled delight and fear. What could he have to say to her in the summer-house that evening? He had never asked her to meet him anywhere before, and Eva felt just a little frightened, while conscious that she was doing wrong, and acting deceitfully in granting his request.

She met him punctually at the hour appointed. The other girls were playing lawn-tennis in front of the college, and her disappearance had passed unnoticed.

He was waiting for her just inside the summer-house. Her large hazel eyes rested upon his face with a timid, pleading expression in their liquid depths as they met.

"How good of you to come!" he said, reassuringly, yet without much warmth in his voice. Was he not striving hard to kill that newborn inconvenient love within his breast, to let chill indifference or active hatred take its place?

"I must not stay long," she replied, "or I shall be missed. Indeed I ought not to be here at all, Mr. Glyndon; it is wrong—deceitful. Only you said that you—that—"

"I had something to tell you," he interposed, "and so I have. Can you guess at its nature, Eva?"

Her head drooped, and she made him no reply. "But for you, Eva, I should never have come to Eversleigh College," he continued, with a set look on his face, as if a man determined to carry out a disagreeable and hateful task at any cost, by the strength of an iron will. "Eva, do you love me?"

"Yes—that is, I think I do," she rejoined, confusedly. "Oh! why do you ask?"

"Because I desire to win your love," he said, in a gentler tone, taking her hand in his. "Would you feel sorry if I were to leave this place never to return?"

"I could not bear it," she exclaimed, impulsively. "Oh! Arthur—Mr. Glyndon, do not go!"

"If you wish it I will stay," he went on; "it depends entirely upon you. You do love me then, Eva?"

"Yes, dearly—very dearly!"

"And you will even allow yourself to become engaged to me—if not at once later on?"

"I cannot promise that," she said, with a startled glance. "My father—"

"Is a rich man, I believe, while I am only a poor one," continued Arthur Glyndon, determined at least not to deceive her with regard to his worldly affairs. "Inform him of your love for me, or bid me go straight to him to ask his sanction to it, and he would at once refuse; he would separate us for ever. Either remain silent for the present, or bid me go."

"I cannot do that," she murmured. "I would rather trust you blindly. And yet, if you only knew him, he is such a kind father—such a loving, indulgent father—and I have never had any secrets from him. I am sure he would not refuse his consent to our engagement if he knew that my happiness depended upon it."

Arthur Glyndon smiled grimly.

"I know Mr. Burlington—slightly," he said.

"If I went to him, he would style me a fortune-hunter, and send me about my business. Now, whatever my faults may be, Eva, I am not a fortune-hunter. I seek to woo and win Mr. Burlington's daughter alone. I care nothing for money which you may or may not inherit. Not one penny of it will ever be mine—of that I am convinced. As it is, I may not always remain poor! I may have more to offer you some day than I have now. Will you trust me, and meet me here sometimes, when an opportunity occurs?"

"If my father would consent, why not—?"

"It is useless to dwell upon that. Was he not told you that he expects you to marry a title, and have I one to offer you?"

She was silenced, remembering her father's ambitious views for her, fearing to lose her lover.

"For the present I will say nothing," she replied, "with regard to our mutual love. I—I could not bear to be parted from you entirely, Arthur. Will you not tell me where you first saw me, and when—and—just a little more about yourself?"

"You doubt me," he said, reproachfully.

"No, oh no! I tell me as much or as little as you like," she protested, her sweet face raised to his. "Is it not natural that, loving you, I should feel interested in all that concerns you?"

"Quite! To begin with, I first saw you when walking with the other girls one day, and you know the result. My own history is not a very eventful one. The usual poor, but honest parents, a good education, then my own way to make in the world by teaching others."

The mocking ring in his voice jarred upon the girl's earnest mood. Perceiving this, he stooped down and kissed her forehead. She was just a little disappointed that he had not kissed her lips instead.

"Surely he did not tell me once that he loved me!" reflected Eva, when they had parted; "yet he made me confess my love for him, and the one thing implies the other. Of course it does, and yet I wish that he had said, 'I love you' in as many words. Is it wrong, I wonder, to care so much for him, stranger as he is—to let him fill my heart so completely?"

"So far—success," mused Arthur Glyndon, as he smoked his cigar that night on the parade. "The poor child certainly loves me—I can bend her easily to my will. I wish, though, that I could have compassed my end by any other means. Well, if her love survives the shock of the double disclosure in store for her, I shall not make her a bad husband in one sense. I shan't beat, neglect, or otherwise ill-treat her. And the daughter of a circus proprietor might feel proud to marry a *Fins*—oh, what a fool I am!—as if that were not all passed and done with long ago!"

CHAPTER IV.

If some kind fairy could only have informed Miss Minerva Lexicon of the love affair being carried on between Eva Burlington and the drawing-master within the sacred precincts of the college, it would promptly have been nipped in bud.

No fairy or mortal intervening, however, Arthur Glyndon and Eva found occasional opportunities for carrying on their courtship without being detected. If these opportunities were few and far between, Eva, at least, valued them all the more on that account.

Her schoolfellows fancied her to be less bright and sparkling, more pensive and thoughtful, than of yore. Otherwise she appeared unchanged.

She maintained a strict silence respecting her love for Arthur Glyndon, taking no girl friend into her confidence.

How well she loved him she hardly knew herself. All the wealth of passionate devotion that her young ardent nature was capable of had been poured out at his feet. Her heart was in his keeping, for him to trifle with or cherish at will.

The only thing that troubled Eva was the secrecy upon which Glyndon insisted. She did not like the idea of deceiving either the lady in whose care she was placed or her father.

Conscience pricked her terribly at times. Yet Glyndon had assured her that to reveal their engagement—for it had become an engagement by this time; witness the pretty pearl and turquoise ring hidden away in Eva's desk—would be to insure their immediate and lasting separation, and she had not the courage with which to risk such an alternative.

As the summer vacation drew nigh Arthur Glyndon became very impatient. If he did not win her consent to a runaway marriage previous to that his chance might be lost for ever.

She would go away to join her father at Penwy, and circumstances might erect a barrier between them which he, Glyndon, would be powerless to pull down.

If he found it an easy matter to influence Eva—a loving, inexperienced, trustful girl—he found it very hard just at this time to control himself.

He was in love with her—hopelessly in love—fool, dolt, idiot, though he called himself, for giving way to such infatuation.

Her beauty and innocence, her disposition so frank, generous, sincere, had unconsciously conquered first his hate, then his indifference, and left him as much her lover as if no evil motive had first prompted him in wooing her.

Arthur Glyndon would fain have made Eva Burlington his wife now, apart from any revenge he sought to obtain by means of their marriage. She, the daughter of the man he most hated, had won his heart in exchange for her own.

It had come to this with Arthur Glyndon. He would have relinquished his long-cherished scheme of vengeance against the circus-master had it been possible, rather than have inflicted pain and disillusion upon Eva, when once she became his wife.

But it was not possible. As if to punish him for indulging in such violent passions, his scheme of raptnal and become so intermingled with his love affair that, in order to carry the one to a satisfactory conclusion, he must needs work out the other at the same time. Besides, he had sworn to be revenged upon Ralph Burlington, and he could not break his oath. The utmost he could do was to soften and mitigate the blow ere it fell upon Eva, and presented both her father and her lover to her in their true characters.

"To see her turn away from me in angry loathing, to hear her say that she could never forgive such deception as mine, would be horrible," he reflected. "Well, I have brought the situation upon myself, and I must bear the consequences. It is her future that troubles me far more than my own. Yet, apart from all revengeful motives, I must and will marry her now. I love her too well ever to let her become another man's wife, and she—well, for the present, at any rate, she loves me."

When he thought he had led up to it sufficiently, Arthur Glyndon hinted at the expediency of a runaway marriage, since, under no other circumstances, could they hope to come together.

At first Eva promptly refused, and declared such a course impossible. Then, as Glyndon represented to her that it was their only chance, that no *céd media* between a runaway match and complete final separation existed for them, she wavered.

"It seems so dreadful," she said, tremulously; "and it will make papa so unhappy. If you would only go to him, Arthur, and tell him how we love each other, I am sure he would grant you a favourable hearing."

"My dear little girl, that subject has already been threshed out between us. Were I to do as you wish we should never be allowed to meet again. No, if you do not love me and trust me well enough to become my wife ere the summer vacation I shall quit England for America, with little hope of ever returning."

"What would you have me do?" she asked, unable to face the future without him.

"Leave the college early one morning, and join me at the spot where I shall be awaiting you. Then we will go together to a village church, a few miles distant, where the banns have been duly published, and become man and wife. Is it not such a terrible programme, after all; is it, Eva?"

"I hardly know," she said, smiling through

her tears. "The secrecy, the deception, is what I most object to in it."

"But you don't object to me!"

"You are fishing for a compliment, sir, which you will not get," she retorted, some of the sparkle and brightness coming back to her manner. "Men are frightfully vain. I will marry you in the manner you describe rather than send you away broken-hearted, upon one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you take me to my father as soon as the ceremony is over, that I may tell him all, and implore his forgiveness."

Arthur Glyndon was silent, and the girl little knew how exactly her request coincided with his original plan of action. It had been his intention to take her at once to her father after their marriage in order that he might be amply revenged by witnessing the scene sure to ensue—but now!

"Do you insist upon this, Eva?" he asked, slowly.

"Of course I do," she replied with unusual vehemence. "If you refuse I cannot marry you, Arthur, dearly as I love you. Could I be happy as your wife had I omitted to ask my father's forgiveness for marrying without his consent? I have yielded so much that you might surely indulge me in this."

"It shall be as you wish," he said, with averted eyes. "I may make the necessary arrangements for our marriage now, Eva, darling!"

"Yes, I suppose so," said the girl, half-reluctantly. "Oh, what will Miss Lexicon and the girls say when they find I am gone! You will be kind and loving to me always, Arthur, since for your sake I shall have out myself adrift, perhaps from every familiar tie."

"I could not be otherwise than kind and loving to you," he exclaimed, drawing her towards him suddenly, and kissing her upon lip, cheek and brow. "I love you, Eva—aye, a thousand times better than life itself; and mine is not a boy's transitory passion, but the deep, lasting love of a man. Whatever my faults may be, want of affection for you has no place among them."

"And your friends, Arthur?" she inquired, timidly. "Will you let them know what we intend doing?"

"My friends, child!" he repeated, bitterly. "I have none. I told you, I think, that both my parents died long ago. I have only two or three cousins who ignore my existence, since they are rich, while I am miserably poor. No, it will not be necessary for me to send out cards and cake. Never mind; we shall be none the less happy for dispensing with all that conventional nonsense. I want nothing beyond my sweet little bride."

"If papa will only forgive us and take you into favour, Arthur, I shall be the happiest girl in the world."

"You have not been much with your father—you know but little of him, do you?" asked Glyndon, abruptly.

"No; that is what I regret so much," she replied, a sad look dawning in her beautiful eyes.

"Beyond that fortnight in the summer—always spent at Penwy—and an occasional flying visit to me here at the college, I see nothing of my father. From a child I have been brought up at school, knowing no home life. I believe my father has a Government appointment, something in the Secret Service. He has almost admitted as much, and it involves constant travelling from place to place, either at home or abroad. That is why he cannot have me with him frequently."

A smile, at once compassionate and ironical, curved Arthur Glyndon's lips. Ralph Burlington, the circus proprietor, had, in his love for his only child, pained off a strange story upon her.

"And when you meet, your father is invariably kind to you, Eva?" he said.

"Kind! Oh, I cannot tell you how kind. He loads me with expensive presents, he denies me nothing that I ask him for. That is why I feel so reluctant to grieve or deceive him. Why, he has never spoken harshly to me in his life!"

Arthur Glyndon decided in his own mind, upon hearing this, that it was possible for a man to have two sides to his character, diametrically opposed to each other. Burlington the circus-master, and Burlington the father, did not appear to have many points in common.

"Run in now, dearest," he said to the lovely girl beside him, "or you may be missed. It would never do to arouse Miss Lexicon's suspicions, you know."

"Supposing that—just at first—papa should prove obstinate, and refuse to forgive or to help us?" suggested Eva, lingering. "Is it very terrible to be poor, Arthur?"

"It's better, of course, to be rich," he replied, with a laugh and a frown. "You don't suppose, however, that I am looking to your father to provide for us? He is most unlikely to do so, Eva. I have enough for present wants," he continued, speaking more to himself than to her; "and Lady Jane is good for fifty guineas."

"Lady Jane! Who is she?" cried Eva.

"Oh, a former pupil of mine," he said, coolly. "I trained; that is, I taught her nearly all she knows, and she would help me at a pinch."

"I would rather you did not apply to her except in case of extreme need," said Eva, half inclined to be jealous.

"Very well, I won't," he rejoined, laughingly, as he kissed her again before letting her go.

Eva returned to the college in a very divided frame of mind. The deceit she was practising preyed upon her, while, much as she loved Arthur Glyndon, she could not ignore the fact that she understood him very imperfectly, although about to place herself and her future happiness in his keeping.

A week later Eva quitted the college early one morning, ere even the servants were astir, and met Glyndon in the high road, where he was waiting for her with a dog cart.

She thought him unusually morose and silent as they bowled smoothly and rapidly along between flowering hedgerows, from which the sun had not yet chased off the sparkling dew while all around them the birds were singing gloriously.

"Oh! Arthur, how dreadful it seems!" she said, presently, glancing up at him, with great, frightened, wistful eyes, "to be away from them all for ever—the people I have known and loved. How they will reproach me for leaving them thus!"

"It is not too late to turn back if you regret your decision," he replied, coldly.

"That is cruel and unlike you," she said, with quivering lips. "You know I did not mean that, Arthur."

"Forgive me," he said, throwing his arm round her waist. "I did not wish to pain you, Eva, but I, too, have my serious thoughts this morning."

After that he roused himself with an effort, and drew such a ridiculous sketch of Miss Minerva Lexicon's horror and amazement upon discovering the absence of both student and drawing-master, that Eva was compelled to laugh at it, and to dismiss all gloomy fears and forebodings.

An hour later they were made man and wife in a little whitewashed village church, by an old clergyman, who took everything for granted, and asked no questions.

Kneeling there, before the altar, with the sun streaming in through the one stained-glass window upon the quaint monumental effigies, Eva Burlington gave herself to the man who had won her love, fully conscious of the solemn, binding nature of the oath she was taking, which, unfortunately, is not the case with all brides.

When they had signed the register, and shaken hands with the clergyman, they got into the dog-cart again, and drove off, Eva very subdued and thoughtful.

"It must have been my fancy," she said, placing her hand upon her husband's sleeve; "but I thought I heard you mention three names instead of two, at the altar, Arthur, only I could not catch the last. Was it fancy?"

"Of course," he replied, promptly. "My name is Arthur Glyndon, short and concise. A plain man doesn't require three names in making

his way through the world, does he? What a faithful little goose he is."

"And now we are going straight to my father!" she said, interrogatively. "His last letter was addressed from the Fountain Hotel, Scarborough. Oh, I hope he is still there—that we shall find him at once, and get it over."

A shadow rested upon Arthur Glyndon's handsome face, and he made his bride no immediate reply.

At that moment he was feeling afraid of her—yes, actually afraid of her. The fair, girlish creature in the dove-coloured dress and straw hat trimmed with a wreath of wild roses now sitting beside him, striving to read his face with her clear, candid eyes, was stronger than he by virtue of her innocence, her unsuspecting trust and love.

He was her hero now, her king, but a few hours later and she would turn away from him in shuddering surprise and wounded, outraged love, to seek refuge, perhaps, in her father's arms, if they were still open to her.

Rather than open her eyes to the bitter truth—rather than stab her to the heart in so doing and forfeit her love, which had become so precious to him—Arthur Glyndon was willing, nay, eager, to forego his cherished scheme of vengeance against Ralph Burlington, but it was not to be. He had set forces in motion which he was powerless to check or control.

"Eva, darling!" he said gently, "will you for my sake relinquish this idea of going at once to your father, to inform him of our marriage? I have a reason—an important one—in making this request to you. Let us wait a month or two, going to Folkestone for the present, instead of Scarborough. Do, for my sake, consent!"

Eva burst into a storm of tears.

"Oh, Arthur! you—you promised to take me to him!" she sobbed, reproachfully. "Think how unhappy and anxious he will be when Miss Minerva sends to tell him that I am missing—that I have run away! I must go to him and ask him to forgive me if I am to enjoy any peace of mind. Why should you so much dread meeting him?"

"I dread the interview less on my own account than yours," said Glyndon. "Did you leave a note behind you, or not, at the college?"

"Yes; I left a note on my dressing-table, addressed to Miss Minerva."

"And in it you stated that you were about to marry me?"

"Yes."

"My name alone will suffice to reveal everything to him," muttered Glyndon. "He will soon be on our track. Better to face him at once than to postpone the evil day. And yet, Heaven only knows how I am to bear the sight of her misery, which I shall have caused! You insist upon going straight to your father then, Eva?" he said, sadly. "You will not be gulled by me!"

"Not in this matter. I must and will see him without delay. Don't be angry with me, Arthur," she pleaded, "for being so wilful. In everything else I obey you blindly, but I cannot allow him to remain in suspense and anxiety!"

"Very well, you shall go to him," said Glyndon; "only remember, Eva, if the interview causes you lasting pain and unhappiness, that I implored you not to go. Remember, also, whatever my original motive may have been in wooing you, that I love you dearly now. For Heaven's sake, remember that!"

"What do you mean? What is it that you fear?" she asked, wonderingly.

"You will know ere long," he said, unsatisfactorily, as the dog-cart stopped in front of the country station, and, jumping down himself, he helped her to alight. "Just one kiss, love, there is no one looking, and this is our wedding-day. Let us make the most of it while it lasts!"

CHAPTER V.

ARTHUR GLYNDON had kept himself well posted up in the movements of Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome during his stay at Leamington.

He knew it was then performing at Scar-

borough, hence the paternal letter dated from the Fountain Hotel which Eva had lately received.

The newly-married pair had a carriage to themselves right throughout the journey. More than once Arthur Glyndon was on the point of making a full confession to his young wife as they went along, instead of waiting until he stood face to face with her father.

But his courage failed him ere he could utter the self-incriminating words. For the first time in his chequered career Glyndon was guilty of cowardice.

Had it been a man in question he would not have shrunk from the ordeal, however painful; but a girl, and that girl his wife, loving him passionately, trusting him blindly, how could he undecieve her and reveal his own duplicity, the evil motive that had first drawn him towards her?

In the face of such a revelation concerning the past dare he hope that she would believe in his present love for her, which, Heaven knows, was genuine enough? Would not indignation and distrust supersede every warmer feeling in her breast towards him?

When they reached Scarborough she was still in blissful ignorance respecting her husband's antecedents and his lately severed connection with her father.

She felt both surprised and sorry, though, when she heard Glyndon tell the cabman to take them to the Harp instead of the Fountain Hotel.

"Why not let us stay at the same hotel with papa?" she asked, quickly. "I should so much prefer it, Arthur."

"Oh, I always stay at the Harp when I pay a flying visit to Scarborough," he replied, leaning back in the cab, his face well in the shade. "It's—it's a comfortable house, Eva, and I don't know much of the Fountain. Perhaps it will be as well for us not to give your father too much of our society at first—to throw ourselves at his head, as it were, by selecting the same hotel."

"I hope he is still here," said the girl, earnestly, her little hands clasped upon her lap, her eyes full of suspenseful yearning. "When once we have seen him and told him all the worst will be over. Oh, he must forgive us! He could not harden his heart against us for long, however angry he may be at first, could he, Arthur?"

"I don't suppose Mr. Burlington will refuse to forgive you, dear," was the evasive reply.

"Well, then, since we are one now, Arthur, the forgiveness must include you as well," said Eva, laughing nervously at her own little joke.

It was evening when they found themselves safely landed at their hotel, and the various places of amusement then delighting Scarborough, among others Burlington's Hippodrome, would soon be opening their doors.

As soon as the newly-married pair had dined, Eva by this time in a state of repressed excitement almost unbearable—expressed a wish to see her father.

"Why not wait until to-morrow?" suggested Glyndon, aware that Ralph Burlington must ere now have left the hotel for the circus.

"No, oh, no! I would far rather get the interview over," said Eva, imploringly; "and at once. Miss Lexion may have sent him a telegram, and, if so, how miserable he must be feeling. How wicked and deceitful he must deem me! Dear Arthur, please take me to him without any delay. If I were only quite sure that he is still at the Fountain Hotel!"

"He is," said Glyndon, curtly. "I have already ascertained that."

"Oh, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, "that removes one fear, and for the rest—well, I cannot imagine papa being angry with me. From him I have met with nothing but love and tenderness. Arthur, you foolish fellow, I believe you positively dread meeting your father-in-law."

"I dread nothing but the loss of your love, Eva, my wife, my darling!" he said, hoarsely.

"The loss of my love!" she repeated, in all amazement. "Why, Arthur, you cannot know what you are saying. I could not help loving you were I to try. If you were to break my heart, its last beat would be full of love for you."

I am not one of those women who love to order, as it were—whom a little thing can render cold and unforgiving. You are part of myself, and naught save death can ever come between us."

Her liquid hazel eyes were raised to his as she spoke, full of sweet tremulous love-light, and implicit confidence in the man of her choice.

Stepping down abruptly Arthur Glyndon crushed the warm golden hair against his cheek, and raised kisses upon his girl-bride's lovely face.

Her clinging, passionate devotion was already becoming his sorest punishment. He had gained the treasure only to lose it.

"You wish to see your father to-night; you will not even wait until to-morrow, Eva!" he said, miserably.

"No, let us go at once. A painful thing should never be deferred, and he will not prove half so formidable as you imagine."

Without a word he prepared to accompany her.

"It is not far from here," he said, as they quitted the hotel. "I know the way, and we can easily walk."

Ten minutes brought them to the circus, with its numerous outbuildings. Eva glanced at her husband in mute inquiry.

"We shall find your father inside," he said.

"In the circus! Had we better not wait until he comes out, and let the interview take place at his hotel? Arthur," grasping his arm convulsively, as her eyes rested upon the scarlet and gold letters over the principal entrance, gaily advertising "Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome." "What is the meaning of that? It is my name and papa's."

"Eva, there is a double surprise in store for you, poor child, and a very sad one," he said, compassionately, wishing—oh! how vainly—his own vengeful work undone. "I ought to have prepared you for it, but I lacked—the courage. Your father has deceived you, with regard to his social status. He is simply Ralph Burlington, the proprietor of the largest travelling circus throughout England. His birth name or Government never existed, save in his own imagination."

She turned so pale that he feared she was about to faint. There was more strength in her nature, however, than he had given her credit for.

"My father a circus proprietor!" she said, blankly, "not a gentleman of good family, possessed of ample means! Oh, why has he allowed me to grow up under such a false impression—to fill such a false position!"

"Your mother was a lady," he explained, briefly; "and your father wished you to be under no disadvantage in society as you grew up, owing to his profession. I believe his motive in deceiving you was a kindly one."

"You knew," she faltered, "and yet you did not tell me."

"I had my reasons for remaining silent. Eva, after this you will not seek to see your father to-night amidst his professional surroundings—you could not bear it."

"Yes, I will see him," she persisted. "I must accustom myself to the truth. Oh! if he had not hidden it from me so long!"

Surprised at the self-possession which high-breeding enabled her to evince under such painful circumstances, in mortal dread of the revelation, the disclosure closely affecting himself, yet awaiting her, Arthur Glyndon drew his wife's arm through his own, and led her towards the circus tent.

As they entered it by a side door a large ferocious ugly bulldog belonging to Ralph Burlington, came running towards them. Eva shrank back in affright.

"Don't be afraid, miss," said a groom, who happened to be passing at the time. "Tom won't hurt you; he's thorough-bred, and a well-bred dog is like a well-bred man, for the matter of that. He knows how to behave himself in genteel company, and he knows how to take care of himself when anybody interferes with him. Why!" recognising Eva's escort, "blast it! it ain't Mr. Glyndon come back again! Glad to see you, sir."

This unexpected recognition of her husband

by one of the circus people caused Eva a fresh pang of surprise and terror. What could be the meaning of it all? she asked herself, wildly. Was everyone in league to cheat and deceive her?

She felt sick and giddy, almost uncertain as to her own identity as Glyndon led her along the dim, draughty, circular passage.

Eva she could question him anew a curtain screening one of the entrances to the ring was raised, admitting a stream of light, and a boy in a circus dress came out, having finished his performance, closely followed by a tall man in ordinary tweed clothing.

"Three times to-night you contrived to blunder, young man," said Ralph Burlington, savagely, boxing the boy's ears until they rang again. "You're fit for nothing but a penny show at a fair. Be a little more careful to-morrow, or I'll make you smart for it—d'ye hear?"

As the boy ran past her, sobbing, Eva regarded him with a look of scorn, whom she had not recognized, with flashing, indignant eyes. Then, as Ralph Burlington turned sharply round, she uttered a low-voiced exclamation—it was her father!

Desirous of shielding her if he could, Arthur Glyndon stepped forward.

"Hullo, Glyndon!" exclaimed the circus proprietor, half-defiantly, yet not without a conciliatory ring in his voice. "So you've thought better of it, and come back to us again, have you?"

After her trainer's abrupt departure, Lady Jane had refused her food, and gone through her performance very badly indeed with a total stranger. Ralph Burlington regretted this the more since Lady Jane's "business" had always been a favourite feature with the audience. If Glyndon liked to overlook that blow and join on again, why—be might.

"I have brought my wife with me," said Glyndon, his voice sounding strange and hard. "She wished to see you, Mr. Burlington, otherwise I should not have been here to-night."

"Your wife, eh?" repeated Ralph Burlington, glancing in Eva's direction. "So you ran away to get married, did you? Is the lady a professional? If so I may be able to offer her an engagement."

"Father!"

Eva uttered but the one word as she stepped forward and confronted him. It was enough, however. The swarthy hue forsook Ralph Burlington's face; he staggered back against a wooden partition, his whip falling from his hand.

"Eva! Good Heaven! What brings you here?" he gasped.

"I wanted to ask your forgiveness," she replied, mournfully, "for having married without your consent. I did not expect to find you thus, to be so suddenly enlightened with regard to your real profession, father. It—it overcame me a little at first. I wish you had not concealed the truth from me so long. Oh, father," as he remained silent, staring blankly at her, "you will not refuse to forgive me for leaving the college and becoming Mr. Glyndon's wife. We were married only this morning."

"His wife!" repeated Ralph Burlington in low, hoarse tones, grasping his daughter's wrist as he spoke; "did I hear you aright! His wife?"

"Yes."

Like a wild beast in its fury the circus-master turned upon Arthur Glyndon.

"You villain, oh! you villain!" he gasped. "So this is your revenge!"

"Call it what you like," said Glyndon, stercorously, "but spare her. I alone am to blame for what has occurred. She is my wife; nothing can alter that fact, Ralph Burlington!"

"Arthur—father!" exclaimed the terrified girl. "You know each other! What is this about revenge! Oh! tell me the meaning of it all, or I shall lose my reason!"

The unusual scene, the sound of voices, had attracted many of the artists belonging to the circus to the spot. They were listening wide-eyed and open-mouthed to the exciting, highly interesting conversation being carried on. Jimmy

Waters was there, and the acrobats, and Milla Montmorency, with several young ladies airily attired for riding in the ring, not to mention the performing dogs in scarlet coats and little cocked hats. Not to such a motley audience had Eva Burlington expected to relate the story of her wooing.

"Eva, what do you know of this man you have married!" demanded Ralph Burlington. "Unhappy girl, how did his first become acquainted with you?"

"At the college. He has been drawing-master there for the last five months," she replied, wondering why Arthur remained so silent, standing there with bowed head and folded arms. "You—you do not know anything against him, father, save his poverty, which he told me of before we were married! You will forgive us both, since we love each other so well."

"Love!" exclaimed Burlington, the veins in his forehead swelling as if they would burst. "Disobedient, wilful girl, you need no sorer punishment than that which you have brought upon yourself in marrying that man. I see it all. He sought you out—by what means I cannot tell—and made you his wife in order that he might be revenged upon me. Six months ago he was in my employ as a professional. He proved insolent and incompetent, words passed between us, and I struck him. He disappeared that night, vowing vengeance against me; but I little thought what shape it would take. To marry you, to bring you here, to ruin your life and all my hopes connected with it—the villain! I could kill him where he stands! He married you for hate—not love!"

A cry broke from the girl's lips, the agony in her brown eyes as she raised them to her husband's face he never forgot.

"Arthur—tell me—is this true?" she asked, brokenly.

"Listen to my version of the matter before you condemn me, Eva," he said, imploringly. "It is true that—although a gentleman by birth and education—I had fallen low enough to accept an engagement with your father. It is not true that I proved either insolent or incompetent. He disliked me for some reason, and he treated me with the utmost coarseness and brutality."

"A small debt I had contracted gave him additional power over me. At last he struck me, while retaining possession of the valuable horse which enabled me to gain a living. I could bear no more—I left him."

"While my passion was at its height someone informed me of your existence—of the manner in which you had been brought up to consider yourself a lady, well connected, of your father's exceeding love for you."

"I determined, if possible, to punish him for the misery he had inflicted upon me through his child. I went to Leamington with the idea of winning you and making you my wife, irrespective of what you might be like in person or disposition; bent only on revenge. But that did not last. I grew to love you for yourself alone, as I had never loved any woman before. Your beauty and gentleness aroused my better nature. I could not renounce you then."

"At this moment I solemnly declare that you are unspeakably dear to me, Eva. For your sake—to spare you this disclosure—I was even willing to forego my cherished scheme of reprisal. Remember how, only this morning, I implored you not to come here, but you insisted, and I had to give way."

"Eva, if I have sinned grievously against you it was under terrible provocation, and since then I have bitterly repented. If everything else about me is false, my love for you is genuine. Darling, you will forgive me, you must!"

He strove to take her hand, but she withdrew it hastily from him.

"My heart is broken!" she moaned, then fell fainting at her father's feet.

Ralph Burlington raised her hastily, while the women present applied restoratives. Then, as soon as a cab could be fetched, he went away in it with his daughter to the Fountain Hotel, Arthur Glyndon making no attempt to follow them.

He returned to his hotel a miserable man,

while tongues wagged freely at the circus, discussing the romantic incident, pitying Eva, blaming Glyndon, yet holding Ralph Burlington responsible for what had occurred.

And Ralph! He sat by his daughter's couch, divided between passionate anger and sorrow, rendered none the less bitter through the consciousness that he had treated Glyndon very badly once.

In return, all his love-prompted deceit had been exposed, his plans for his only child's future hopelessly destroyed.

She was Glyndon's wife, curse him! and Glyndon was a beggar. The shock to Eva contained in the double disclosure had been a terrible one.

For a girl, priding herself upon her good lineage, reared amidst aristocratic surroundings and acquaintances, to learn that her father was only a circus proprietor, her husband a professional lately in his employ, was, to say the least of it, overwhelming.

Yet her love had suffered even more than her pride—Arthur Glyndon, in spite of the deceit he had practised, was dear to her as ever.

It was the assertion proceeding from her father that hated, not love, had induced him to marry her which had wounded her most. Could she but have believed Arthur Glyndon, when he swore that he loved her dearly, half the sting would have been taken from her trouble at once.

"Are you angry with me, father?" she whispered, drawing his face down to hers. After all he was her father, and she had experienced nothing but love and kindness from him.

"Not with you, child," was the reply, "but with him. You were so young, so ignorant of the world, Eva, and you had no mother to guide you. I wanted you brought up as a lady; that is why you were not allowed to know anything about the circus. And he has ruined all my plans! Let him keep away from me, or I—I shall kill him, Eva!"

She shuddered convulsively.

"Father, you must not say that," she protested, earnestly. "I love him—I love him as dearly as ever. I may be wrong and foolish, but I cannot help it. If anything should happen to Arthur—to my husband—it would kill me. Oh! if I could but feel certain that he loves me, ever so little, in return!"

And Ralph Burlington, perceiving how thoroughly Glyndon had the girl's happiness in his keeping, hated his son-in-law more fiercely than ever.

CHAPTER VI.

ARTHUR GLYNDON paced moodily up and down his room at the Harp Hotel, alone upon his wedding night, was hardly a man to be envied.

He had avenged himself fully upon Ralph Burlington for past insults, and yet of the two men perhaps Arthur Glyndon was the more miserable that night.

He enjoyed his triumph over the circus proprietor so much that presently, tired of walking to and fro, he flung himself into a chair by the table and buried his face in his hands, great, tearless sobs shaking him from head to foot as he thought over it.

"Oh, Eva, my wife, my darling! If to-night's work could but be undone!" he exclaimed, miserably. "It has turned your love for me into hatred—your joy into lasting sorrow. That look as you shrink away from me—shall I ever forget it! It will haunt me to my dying day in its agony of wounded love and dawning horror. And he, your father, will do his utmost to blacken me in your sight, to widen the gulf already yawning wide between us. But I cannot, I will not, give you up without another effort to win your forgiveness, to regain your love. Apart from your existence would be well nigh unendurable. Eva, you must, you shall forgive me yet!"

He went to bed with the firm intention of obtaining an interview with his young wife upon the morrow, no matter what obstacles her father might place in the way, and pleading his own cause.

He would implore her to return to him, to judge him less severely, to afford him an opportunity of atoning for that wrong act recently committed.

Surely his great love ought to carry some weight with it, and induce her to forgive him! If she refused, well, in that case, he would leave England—never to return.

Arthur Glyndon had fallen into an uneasy dream-haunted slumber when a loud shouting below in the street caused him to spring up quickly and rush to the window.

There was a dull red glare in the sky about half-a-mile away, as it seemed to him, while columns of smoke were rising above the house-tops in that direction.

Dressing himself hurriedly Arthur Glyndon went downstairs. It was two o'clock in the morning, yet everyone at the Harp was astir. Those terrible cries of "Fire! Fire!" the ringing of the alarm-bell, and the rumble of the fire engine as it dashed by on its way to the scene of conflagration, had drawn them all from their beds like magic.

"Where is the fire!" asked Glyndon, of a costless waiter, still half-awake.

"Not quite sure, sir; but I believe it's at the Fountain Hotel," replied the carpet-trotter. "The boots has gone to make inquiries, and—"

But ere he could finish his sentence Arthur Glyndon had started off like a madman in the direction of the Fountain, leaving the waiter staring after him open-mouthed.

The Fountain on fire, and the woman he loved staying there with her father! A sickening dread lest she should be in danger took possession of Glyndon as he tore through the streets intervening between him and the hotel.

Until that moment he had not realised how unspeakably dear and precious his girl-wife was to him.

Confusion dire confounded awaited him at the Fountain. It was a very large hotel, and at the first alarm of fire the visitors staying in it had hurried down to the hall in every possible variety of costume.

Many had left such trifles as hair and teeth upstairs in the privacy of their own rooms. One gentleman had descended stiffly clad in his night-shirt and a dress coat which he had caught up as the first thing that came to hand.

The fire had broken out in one of the corridors, and was steadily gaining ground. The great staircase would soon be impassable, the firemen's strenuous efforts hardly seemed to tell upon the flames.

Amidst the mob of visitors and servants assembled in the hall, ready to rush out should the fire spread, Arthur Glyndon searched in vain for Eva.

Pushing in amongst the half-demented men and women he ran against Ralph Burlington in the act of making frantic inquiries about his daughter.

He could not discover from anyone the number of her room, or the corridor in which it was situated.

"Eva! Good Heavens! where is she!" shouted Glyndon in his ear.

"She has not come down with the rest," cried Ralph, wildly, forgetful of all save his child's peril. "And none of these fools can tell me which is her room. Presently it will be too late to save her!"

"Is she here in her own name or mine!" asked Glyndon, grasping the maddened man by the arm.

"Her own."

"Miss Burlington's room," he said, loudly, making his voice heard above the surrounding din. "Does anyone here know the number of it?"

"Number 57, third corridor," replied a frightened chambermaid.

A groan burst from Ralph Burlington's lips. "It's next to the one on fire," he exclaimed, making a dash for the smoke-wreathed staircase; "but I'll save her, or perish in the attempt."

"It's certain death," cried a dozen voices, while a dozen hands held him back. "You must not go."

"No, but I will," said Arthur Glyndon, ere

the circus proprietor could shake off his friendly detractors. "The right is mine, Burlington," clutching his hand for a second; "I'll save Eva, or die with her, as a man should do when his wife is in question."

Ere they could prevent him doing so Glyndon had rushed up the staircase, and become lost to sight amidst the smoke that enshrouded it.

His eyes pricked and smarted terribly, little tongues of flame darted through the smoke at him as he went. The firemen, some of whom were inside the building, playing upon the flames, called after him, warningly, as he hurried past them, but Glyndon took no heed.

The entrance to the third corridor was fairly alight. Dashing through the smoke and flame, a water-saturated handkerchief over his mouth and nostrils, Glyndon entered it, calling loudly upon Eva. There was a little more air here, but the gas had gone out, and the numbers upon the doors undistinguishable.

To his delight, a door half-way down the corridor opened suddenly, and Eva's voice responded to his call.

Clad in her dressing-gown, her golden hair falling around her in shining waves, she ran out to meet her husband.

"Oh, Arthur! save me, save me!" she cried, clinging wildly to him in her fright.

"I came on purpose," he said, coolly, in the attempt to reassure her. "There is no time to be lost," he continued, snatching a blanket from the bed and wrapping it round her. "Your father! oh, he's all right, downstairs with the rest. He wanted to come after you, but I chose to come myself. Now, Eva, shut your eyes, and trust yourself wholly to me."

He hurried her towards the entrance to the corridor, but a choking volume of smoke and flame drove them back again. Even in that short time the stairs had become impassable, and the corridor, burning fiercely at one end, a perfect trap in which they were imprisoned.

"We are too late—we must try the window," said Glyndon, going back to Eva's room; "it is the only chance now."

The room looked upon a side street, and it was about thirty-seven feet from the ground. Eva stood there in silence, watching her husband with fascinated eyes, as, after shutting the door to keep out as much smoke as possible, he tore down the blind cords, and knotted the bedclothes together to form a rope.

"Arthur, what are you going to do!" she asked presently.

"I am going to lower you and myself from this window," he replied, still working hard at his rope; "since the fire-escape does not seem at all likely to turn up in time. It is not half so dangerous as you think, Eva. You have only to cling to me like grim death, and the thing is done."

"You have imperilled your own life in the attempt to save mine," she said, speaking quietly, in spite of her terror.

"That is not much for a man who loves his wife as I love you to do," was the rejoinder. "Ah!" regretfully. "I thought it wasn't long enough. Stay here, Eva. I'm only going into the next room."

He went, and returned again almost directly, with more blind cords and a great heap of bedclothes.

Having finished his rope, he attached one end of it firmly to the bars of the grate, then going to the window, flung it wide open, and paid his rope out carefully.

A roar of many voices floated up to him, but he paid no heed to it. Cool and collected as ever, he wrapped the blanket tightly round his young wife's trembling form, then tied her to him by means of the window cords.

"Put your arms round my neck, and don't look down," he said, briefly. "Eva," with a sudden change of tone, "have you forgiven me? Do you believe now in the sincerity of my love? If they are the last words that I am ever to utter in this world I tell you that I love you. Had I loved you less I should have refused to allow you to marry me when it came to the point; but I could not give you up—you had grown so dear

to me. Do you credit me with speaking the truth—now?"

"Yes," she murmured, the knowledge of his love affording her intense joy even in that supreme moment. "I shall never doubt your love again. It is mine, and mine alone!"

"And—darling—I am forgiven!"

Her lips were pressed to his by way of reply.

"I was never angry with you, Arthur, only grieved and fearful lest you had married me from vengeful motives only. Now that I am sure of your love I care for nothing else. I feel brave and strong."

He kissed her again as they stood upon the window-sill, and bade her remember his instructions. The flames were leaping out from the windows below as they began their perilous descent.

"At least we shall die together," whispered the girl, hiding her pale face upon his breast. "Oh! Arthur, you have no blanket round you!"

"It would prevent me from using my arms," he replied, with a glad sense of victory already gained. "Hold tight, little woman. Now!"

Hand over hand, sailor-fashion, Arthur Glyndon went down his improvised rope, which bore its double burden well.

It was a fearful descent, anxiously watched by those below. The smoke and flames seemed to smother them up occasionally.

Eva, protected by the blanket, suffered less. Arthur Glyndon could hardly avoid losing his hold of the rope now and then, in the pain he endured, while the dread lest it should be burnt through ere they reached the ground was uppermost in his mind.

Only a few minutes, yet they seemed like so many ages, fraught with awful peril and suspense, while two human beings passed through a burning fiery furnace on their way to life and safety.

Only a few minutes, yet as long as they lived Arthur and Eva Glyndon never forgot them.

Two tall ladders had been placed against the side of the hotel. A man was mounted on each, ready to aid Glyndon as soon as he came within reach with his burden.

A roar from the crowd greeted them as they slowly descended, supporting the half-insensible forms between them.

Their escape had not been effected a moment too soon. Already flames were bursting from the window of Eva's room.

Ralph Burlington, who had witnessed the descent, cut the cords that bound his daughter to Arthur Glyndon, and clasped her in his arms.

She had fainted through fright. Otherwise, save for being slightly singed and blackened, she had escaped uninjured, thanks to the protecting blanket.

Arthur Glyndon, however, was badly burnt. The trio had not reached the Harp Hotel ere the fire escape arrived, too late to assist Glyndon and Eva in escaping, but not too late to aid others, who, through delaying too long, had found the staircase impassable.

As soon as Eva recovered consciousness she sat up and asked for her husband.

"He is being looked after upstairs," said Ralph Burlington.

"Is he badly hurt?" she cried, fearfully.

"Severely, I believe, but not dangerously," replied her father, "The doctor is dressing his wounds now. It is not necessary for you to go to him, Eva."

"Not necessary!" she repeated. "Father, can you forget that he has just proved his love for me by saving my life?"

"But for his unpardonable conduct you would not have been placed in any danger," said Ralph Burlington, with pitiless logic.

His feelings towards Arthur were of a mixed nature. He was still ferociously angry with him for having married his daughter and ruined all his plans for her future, while he could but experience some gratitude, since Glyndon had saved Eva's life at the risk of his own.

The next few days were spent by Eva at her husband's bedside. Arthur Glyndon's burns gave him severe pain; yet the reconciliation effected by means of the fire between himself and

his girl-bride more than compensated him for all his sufferings.

To have Eva with him, nursing and waiting upon him, to know that he had regained her love and confidence, was blissful to him. She had heard the worst, and still they were together!

A few days afterwards, as they were all gathered in Glyndon's room, a dapper little man called, introduced himself as a solicitor, and informed Glyndon of the death of his cousin, adding,—

"Their decesses places you in possession of both title and estate," said the solicitor, "a next-of-kin. You are Lord Ormsby, with an income of something like thirty thousand a year."

"Lord Ormsby!" echoed Eva, while Ralph Burlington clung to the rail at the foot of the bed to support himself. The news had made him giddy.

"Not bad that for a circus artiste, eh, Eva!" said Glyndon, looking up at his young wife tenderly. "Sorry as I am for my cousin, I am glad to have something worth offering you at last, my darling. The title your father coveted for you and the fortune will both be yours as my wife!"

"I cannot understand!" she exclaimed, confusedly. "It is all so strange and unexpected."

Ralph Burlington remained silent.

"Let me explain," Arthur went on. "My real name is or was Arthur Glyndon Fitzgerald. My father was the younger son of a peer. Both he and my mother died when I was a child. I dropped the Fitzgerald after getting into a row at college, and being cut by my family. Since then I have led a wild, adventurous life, with no private source of income to fall back upon. I was very hard up indeed when I joined your troops, Burlington. But for the untimely death of my cousin I should have remained hard up to the end of the chapter—for they would never have helped me. Now that I am in a position to gratify your ambition with regard to your daughter, will you shake hands and consent to let bygones be bygones?"

Ralph Burlington did shake hands, but in rather a shamefaced fashion.

Lord and Lady Ormsby had not long been established at Ormsby Park are Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome became a thing of the past.

In deference to his son-in-law's wishes Ralph disposed of it. He visits his daughter occasionally—he has the good sense not to come too often—and he is always made welcome by Arthur for his wife's sake.

Riches and their responsibilities have sobered Lord Ormsby; and he fills his exalted position well, his beautiful wife—thanks to her superior education—ably seconding him.

They are popular throughout the county; are actually in love with each other still, while Lady Jane, enjoying a comfortable stall in the Ormsby stables, is a great pet with the boys and girls springing up around them as the years go by.

[THE END.]

MY SWEETHEART.

CHAPTER XLIII.

As Mildred Garstin held the fatal vial to her lips and drained it to the dregs, she heard a hoarse cry directly at her elbow, and the vial was struck from her hand and was shivered into a thousand pieces as it fell upon the cold marble tombstone.

In the dim, uncertain light, Mildred saw a white, horrified face bending over her—the face of the chemist's assistant from whom she had procured the draught.

"What would you do, girl?" he cried, hoarsely. "Take your own life!"

"I am so tired of living!" sobbed Mildred, pitifully. "No one cares for me in this great, cold, cruel world; no one cares if I live or die, no why should I struggle against adverse fate any longer? I am glad I have had the courage to end it all to-night."

"If you had but had your own way you would indeed have ended it all," answered the young man, grimly; "but a kind Providence has frustrated your plans. I gave you the liquid at one-third its original strength. This precaution has saved your life. I felt troubled about you after you had passed out of the store, and on my way home I espied you in the distance. Some impulse prompted me to follow you, and I am glad I have done so, despite the terrible chase you have led me. The amount of laudanum you have taken will make you very ill shortly, and for that reason I must get you away from here at once. I shall have the satisfaction of knowing, however, that it will not prove fatal. Come, my good girl, you must go with me. Have you no home, no friends?"

But by this time Mildred was beyond comprehending him. Her head had grown dizzy, and she would have fallen face downward on her mother's grave if the young clerk had not suddenly stretched out his arm and caught her.

"A fine predicament to be placed in, to be sure!" he muttered. "What in the world should I do if anyone were to detect me carrying out this young girl from such an uncanny place at this hour of the night and in this condition? There's one thing sure; I should be arrested on the spot, and it would give me some trouble to prove the truth concerning this affair. Thank Heaven, Aunt Young lives in this vicinity!"

Slender as Mildred was, she was no light burden to carry a furlong or more, and when he arrived at his destination he was well-nigh exhausted.

The tall, thin, elderly woman who opened the door in response to his knock was amazed at the spectacle that met her view.

"What in the world does this mean, John!" she gasped.

He could not enter into the details of the whole affair then and there, so he merely said:

"I have discovered a young girl in a dead faint. I have brought her in here for you to see what is the matter with her—she may be very ill."

"Bring her right in quickly, John," she answered, leading the way to the little sitting-room, in which a log fire burned and spluttered cheerfully.

Mildred was laid on a lounge, and with a will Mrs. Young set about restoring her; but it seemed to be quite useless.

"There is something more the matter with the girl than a mere fainting fit," she said, sharply.

In a few words he proceeded to tell his aunt the whole circumstances, explaining that he had already administered an antidote for what she had taken, and that its effects would soon become apparent; and almost as soon as he had ceased speaking, Mildred's dark, troubled eyes opened.

She was delirious; but in her rambling, disconnected talk the young clerk's quick ear caught the names of Mr. Barton and Paula.

As was the case with almost everybody in the great metropolis, he had known the banker by reputation, and knew where his residence was, as it was quite near his place of business, and he made up his mind that he would lose no time in going there and learning whether they knew this girl or not, or if they could tell him where her home was.

He knew that Miss Dawes took entire charge of the household since the banker's demise and the young heiress's illness, and despite the lateness of the hour it was for that lady whom he asked, and sent up his card, requesting but a few moments' interview on an important subject.

Great as was Miss Dawes's astonishment at this summons, knowing of the young man, she did not hesitate to give him a few moments' audience in the library.

She listened intently while he told his story and then she said, eagerly:

"I know this young girl Mildred Garstin and I beg that she may be brought here at once. She was employed to attend Miss Barton during her recent illness. Constant attendance and devotion to the young lady told upon the girl. It is a case of overwork. She disappeared very suddenly this afternoon, assigning no cause, and

we were greatly alarmed about what had become of her. Miss Barton gave orders that no pains or expense should be spared in tracing her."

Before midnight Mildred was once more under the same roof with Paula, and great was the girl's amusement when she returned to consciousness and found Miss Dawes bending over her and Paula propped up in an invalid's chair near her.

For a moment her brain was too bewildered to realize clearly all that had taken place, but suddenly all came back to her like a flash, and she, with a startled cry, hid her face in her thin white hands.

But before she could utter the words that came to her lips, Miss Dawes laid a warning hand lightly over them.

"You have been too anxious, and worked too hard, my dear," she said; "and now you are suffering from the reaction. You wandered away from us this afternoon, but we were lucky enough to find you again. Take this," continued Miss Dawes, holding a soothing draught to Mildred's lips. "It will make you sleep, and you will awaken to-morrow morning yourself again."

All that night while Paula lay tossing sleeplessly on her pillow, she was making grand resolutions of bringing about a reconciliation between Mildred and Gregor Thorpe.

But with the morning came a letter from Gregor, begging to see her. It but for one moment, that he might hear his face from her own lips; and her own heart pleaded so strongly within her to see him just once more that she could not find it in her heart to refuse him.

Ah! how handsome he looked, but how pale and wretched, as he entered the room!

"My darling," he said, reproachfully, as he paused a moment on the threshold, and looked at her, "surely you do not mean what you have said! You will not break the heart laid at your feet, you will not send me away! Let my great love plead for me, dear."

Paula felt all her good and grand resolutions about giving him up to Mildred melt like mist before the sun when she saw him standing there before her.

All her life she had been used to having every one give way to her. Mildred had spoiled her more than anyone else. She had never been known to keep for herself anything that Paula had expressed even the most trivial desire for; and now at the crisis of Mildred's future, peace, hope, and happiness, Paula decided that as long as she herself loved Gregor Thorpe, it would be ridiculous to give him up to Mildred. Her sister would never know of Gregor's letter; she need never know that she (Paula) knew that they had once been lovers.

Then came the terrible, stifling thought that Mildred was, unfortunately, the least barrier that had arisen in the path that she might have traversed so happily by Gregor Thorpe's side.

At that very moment a note bearing the signature of Count Orlande was crushed down deep into her pocket—a note in which he declared his intention of giving her no more time to play with him as a kitten plays with her prey. "She should marry him at once," he declared, "even though she lay on her death-bed."

There was only one hope for her, and that was to turn every available article into cash, and marry the man she loved within twenty-four hours, and go away so far that Count Orlande would never find her.

All these thoughts passed through Paula's brain like a flash in the one moment Gregor stood there on the threshold.

"Did you mean it, my darling?" he said, advancing and kneeling at her feet. "Tell me you have repented these cruel words, and that you do not mean to kill all that is good in my life by parting from me."

Should she give him up to poor Mildred, who loved him so? Ah! how the good and the bad angels struggled in her heart for the supreme victory in that moment when she held the fate of three lives in her hand!

"You love him too well to give him up," whispered the still, small voice in her heart. "Such calm natures as Mildred's cannot love deeply. She will soon forget her love dream, and move on in the even tenor of her way. Your

life without him would be one long, bitter torture. Make up with your lover, and be happy with him for ever."

Paula had no power to resist her own heart's pleadings, because she had accustomed herself to gratify her every desire.

"You must answer me, Paula, my little sweetheart," cried her lover, clasping her close in his arms.

The girl lifted her beautiful face to his.

"I thought I could give you up, but I find that I am not strong enough to do it," she murmured, with a dry sob.

"There is no need, dear," Gregor replied, cheerily.

The next hour they spent together was the happiest that either of them ever knew; for they were planning for their wedding, which Paula had promised should take place on the day which had been originally set for it, which was just one week hence.

CHAPTER XLIV.

WHEN Mildred awoke that day, she was, as Miss Dawes predicted, quite herself again.

When she looked out into the sunlit world she could not help feeling thankful to Heaven that her plans of the previous night, to find a means of leaving the world that was so hard and cruel to her, had, after all, miscarried.

She made her simple toilet quickly, and hurried at once to Paula's boudoir.

"Good-morning, dear," said Mildred, crossing over to the divan on which her sister sat. "I am surprised to find you up and dressed so early."

Paula laughed.

"So early!" she echoed. "Why, Mildred, you are late in the day—it is after noon."

She did not add that she had had an early caller, and what the import of that all-important visit had been.

Mildred wondered why Paula looked so bright and joyous, why there was so much colour in her cheeks, and why her eyes shone with such untroubled brilliancy.

While Paula was wondering to herself how she could break to Mildred the news of Gregor Thorpe's call, and that she was soon to marry him, strange thoughts upon the very same subject were flitting through Mildred's brain.

Gregor Thorpe had accused her so bitterly of parting him from Paula, that she thought it would not be more than right to plead with Paula and try to persuade her to make up with Gregor again and marry him. They would be so happy with each other. As for her own life, it could not matter much what became of her. All brightness was over for her for ever—her love-dream was shattered. The one whom she had so blindly worshipped had turned from her to a fairer, prettier face.

Even in that moment, lines she had once read came back to her, and a great rush of tears filled her dark, sad eyes as she thought of them.

"And this is all! The end has come at last!
The bitter end of all that pleasant dream
That met a halo o'er the happy past
Like golden sunshine on a summer stream."

"Of what are you thinking so intently, Mildred?" asked Paula, curiously, looking down at the white face of the girl kneeling on the low hassock beside her.

"I was thinking of your happiness," returned Mildred, in a choking voice, "and of the happiness of one who loves you better than his own life."

"You mean Gregor Thorpe?" said Paula, slowly.

"Yes," murmured Mildred, faintly, and adding in a low voice from which she made a heroic effort to keep back the sobs: "Oh, Paula, don't break your engagement with him!—You are breaking your own heart by so doing—as well as his. Marry him, darling, and your future will know no anguish, no bitter longing for what might have been."

"Why do you plead so earnestly with me?" said Paula, frowning, her eyes drooping before the

earnest dark ones raised, full of tears, to her own.

"For your own good, Paula," sobbed Mildred. "Ah, how I wish I could make my every word a prayer to you."

"Would it please you so very much if—if I should make up with Gregor and consent to marry him, after all?" murmured Paula, confusedly.

"Yes," returned Mildred, huskily, "for I realise that which you can never know—what it means to go through life without the one you love."

Paula burst into tears.

Mildred's great heroic unselfishness touched her. Ah! what a despicable thing she had done to renew her betrothal with Gregor Thorpe when poor Mildred loved him so. She did not even have the courage to tell Mildred that Gregor had been there that morning.

"Promise me you will think over what I have said, dear," murmured Mildred, earnestly. "Remember, all your future lies in the balance."

"I promise you, Mildred," she returned, with a little guilty flush stealing over her cheeks.

That afternoon Paula was brought down to the drawing-room for the first time in many weeks.

It would have been a happy day for Paula but for one event which marred it. Late in the afternoon Count Orlando called, and it so happened that at that particular time he found Paula alone in the drawing-room.

"Good-afternoon my dear," he said, advancing to meet her with outstretched hands, adding jocularly as he drew up a chair by her side: "you do not seem overjoyed to see me, that is certain. Any other young girl would have had a smile of welcome for the man whom she was soon to marry, I fancy."

A sudden chill swept over Paula.

"Do not shrink from me, my dear. I am not an addict," he said, frowning.

"You are worse!" cried Paula, "a thousand times worse. You sting my very soul with your unendurable presence!"

"You will make me the very best of wives, my darling!" laughed the count, "from the fact that you will not be for ever craving caresses or expressions of affection. That sort of thing soon tires a man, you know. I could not fancy anything more tiresome than marrying a young girl who adored me at the outset. Your hatred gives zest to the pursuit, my sweetheart Paula. You hate me now, but I will swear that you will love me desperately before the year is out. However, it is not of this that I wished to speak. I must take advantage of the few precious moments that I find you here alone to settle about the wedding."

He saw the girl grow pale to the lips, but he went on:

"I have decided that it shall take place one week from to-day. You dare not oppose my plans; and I shall therefore expect you to hold yourself in readiness."

No wonder all the colour had left Paula's face, for that was the very date of her wedding with Gregor Thorpe.

Did he know of it! she wondered.

His next words dispelled that fear.

"On the day following the date which I have set, I am called away; and as the trip I intend to take is a long one, you must be ready to accompany me. I do not like to use unpleasant words nor harsh measures when they can be avoided. The wedding ought to be on a grand scale; but as you have so little time to prepare for it, I suppose we shall have to waive all that and have a very quiet one. When we return to London, we will set up an establishment on a scale of such magnificence that it will astonish the natives."

"And you are planning to do all this with my money!" cried Paula, with flashing eyes, her voice quivering with scorn.

"With your money? Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the count. "By no means. It is to be done with the late Mr. Barton's ducaats. You have no more right to them than I have, my dear. You should not be so particularly interested in what does not concern you," he added, maliciously. "But I have not come here to quarrel with you, my sweetheart Paula—to temporise, rather."

She crept up to him and laid a little ice-cold hand on his.

"If you only would temporise with me," she sobbed, "I—I would be so thankful to make terms with you. I will give you half of the money to go and leave me in peace. Ay, I will give it all to you—every penny!"

He laughed loud and long at this.

"All the gold in the universe would not tempt me to lose you, my beautiful Paula!" he declared. "You are a fortune in your own sweet self; and added to this will be all the glory of a most perfect revenge. In wedding you I shall strike deep into the heart of Gregor Thorpe. He came between me and a fortune; I come between him and his heart's desire. What is all the wealth in the universe to a man if he cannot win the one woman on earth whom he loves! No, no; do not think you can tempt me to set you free for all wealth of the old banker—you go with the treasure. I thought I had settled that long ago. One week from to-day I shall call here, and you shall decide now whether I am to bring a minister with me, or take you to one. You see I am very anxious to please you in every way it is possible. I—Someone is coming this way; answer me quickly; am I to bring a minister here to have the ceremony performed, or take you to the registry office? Speak quickly, Paula."

CHAPTER XLV.

"No, no; do not bring one here!" cried Paula, in terror. "I will meet you whenever you say."

The count seemed greatly pleased by this concession.

"Then let it be at dusk, at the old chapel at the extreme end of this avenue. I shall be there awaiting you. Will you bring a maid with you?"

"Yes," returned Paula, hoarsely.

"Of all things detestable, nothing can equal that of taking a maid along on a wedding-tour. They are always about, and their eyes and ears are always open. Why women are so anxious to have them about is a mystery to me. Still, if you have set your heart on taking a maid along with me, I suppose I shall have to endure it."

The entrance of Miss Dawes and Mildred cut short all further conversation, and after a few commonplace remarks the count took his leave.

"There is something about that man that I do not like," remarked Miss Dawes. "He has not a face to be trusted—he has not a frank, open countenance."

"I quite share Miss Dawes's opinion of this Count Orlando," said Mildred, when she found herself alone with Paula. "He looks like a man disguised, and—of course it is a ridiculous thought to give utterance to—I cannot get over the notion that I have seen him somewhere before. His eyes have a strangely familiar look about them. Oh, Paula, surely he is not the man for whom you would have given up Gregor Thorpe's love!"

All in an instant Paula had flung herself at Mildred's feet, and lay there like a crushed flower.

"Oh, Mildred, listen to me!" she cried. "I have something to tell you—a secret to confide to you. You must help me, or I shall die! I cannot bear my trouble alone; it is killing me!"

Mildred raised her beautiful, white young sister tenderly in her strong arms and placed her in her chair again, among the soft cushions.

"Sit by me, Mildred, and hold my hands tight," she cried. "Oh, Mildred, I am in such great fear of my own self, I—I—feel like flinging open that window and dashing myself out!"

A startled cry broke from Mildred's lips. "Paula, darling, you must not say anything like that," she sobbed. "You terrify me."

"It is true, Mildred; for I am tired of life. I am so miserably unhappy that I wish I could die!"

Mildred looked at her. How could she be unhappy with all the gifts Heaven showers on the favoured ones?

"You were right, Mildred," she went on



"YOU WILL MAKE ME THE VERY BEST OF WIVES, MY DARLING!" LAUGHED THE COUNT.

rapidly. "The Count Orlando does look like a man disguised, despite his clever make-up; for he is disguised. You have not seen him before, Mildred, but you have cause to dislike him; for all the bitter woe of my life lies at his door. The Count Orlando is none other than Pierce Dudley, the foreman of the business where I earned my bread in those old days that seem like an old forgotten dream to me now.

"It was he who coaxed me to that unfortunate escapade on my half holiday. Oh, Mildred, if I had refused to go without first asking mamma or you, my whole life would have been different.

"I have told you since you have been under this roof the whole story of that unfortunate day, and all that accrued from it. I have confessed to you how I happened to fall into temptation when the glowing picture of wealth and poverty was held up before me; and you know how Gregor Thorpe has fallen in love with me without knowing that I, whom the world believes to be the late Mr. Barton's granddaughter, am the Paula Garstin of other days.

"Now listen, Mildred, Pierce Dudley knew all this, and he threatened to expose me to the whole world if I did not marry him. I dared not refuse, you see, although I know he only wanted me for the money which would come to me, and—revenge.

"On the night that Mr. Barton died, we—we—the old gentleman and I—had a bitter quarrel. An hour later I went to the library to confess all to him, and go back to the world and poverty from which his wealth had tempted me, when I—oh, Heaven! how can I tell you about it, Mildred—I found him lying on the sofa—dead!

"And at the moment that I made the horrible discovery, a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder. Turning, I saw Pierce Dudley standing beside me.

"You have murdered him because he threatened to disinheret you!" he cried; and I wonder that those words did not kill me.

"You must sign a paper that you did not

do it," he cried. "Quick! you have no time to lose!"

"He wrote out about half a page, and thrust the pen in my hands.

"Sign it!" he cried, hoarsely. "You must do it to save yourself. You have not an instant to lose."

"I signed it, Mildred, and then the most diabolical laugh that ever was heard broke from his lips.

"Now you are in my power, my beauty!" he cried, with wild exultation. "The victory is mine! Listen, and I will read you what you have signed."

"Oh Heaven! how can I utter the words!—It was a—a—confession, Mildred, that I had killed dear old Mr. Barton for his wealth, to cover up my tracks as a usurper and a fraud; and that I agreed to marry Pierce Dudley if he could be made to promise that he would not betray me.

"Yes, Mildred—may Heaven and the angels help me!—that is the paper I have signed, and which Dudley, who is here disguised as a French count, holds over my head.

"If I refused to marry him they would arrest me, Mildred, and thrust me into a cold and narrow cell, and after a little time they would hang me for the crime. Oh, Mildred, can you picture them leading me to a scaffold and putting a rope about my white neck!"

"Don't, don't, my darling!" sobbed Mildred, piteously, tears falling like rain down her white face: "I cannot bear it."

"You must save me, Mildred," sobbed Paula, piteously, creeping up to her sister and laying her face against the other's dusky cheek—"you must save me. I am so young to die, and I would rather die, Mildred, than marry Pierce Dudley."

"Oh, darling, make a confidant of Gregor Thorpe!" sobbed Mildred. "He will know best what to do."

Paula sprang from Mildred's arms like a wounded bird.

"Never that, Mildred!" she panted—"never

that; for the moment he knew all his love for me would die, and that would be the worst of all. You must think of some other way to help me, Mildred. Pierce Dudley's object here to-day was to force me into the marriage within this coming week, and you know that I cannot."

"Give me time to think how I can help you, darling," sobbed Mildred. "You know I would give my very life, every drop of my heart's blood, to save you from one pang of pain. I will think hard, dear."

"I—I—thought it—if I could but marry Gregor at once," whispered Paula, fearfully, "and go away with him so far that no one would ever find us, perhaps that would save me. I cannot give Gregor up, Mildred, I would die if I did."

"You shall not give him up," answered noble Mildred. "I will try and think out some plan to save you. But, oh! my darling, how true are the words:—

"What a fatal web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!"

Mildred paced the floor of her room all that night, but when morning broke cold and grey over the eastern sky, no thought had come to her that brought her any comfort.

"Oh, Heaven! oh, angel mother! how shall I save our poor Paula!" she sobbed.

Truly the future looked dark no matter which way she viewed it. Poor Mildred! If she but knew what the week following was to bring forth, she would have prayed Heaven and the angels to have taken poor Paula and spared her the pitiful fate in store for her.

(To be continued.)

BOILED cabbage is claimed to be a cure for drunkenness. It is recorded that the ancient Egyptians ate boiled cabbage before their other food if they intended to drink wine after dinner.



"I MAY SEEM TO DISAPPOINT YOU!" SAID LILLIAN—"BUT DO NOT JUDGE ME TOO HARSHLY."

NAMELESS.

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CHAPTER V.

THE demeanour of the three who were staying at Earlsmeare would certainly have puzzled anyone who did not know how strangely they had been brought together.

By tacit agreement Mr. Martin and Captain Beaumont ignored the subject of the unhappy child who had been called Lillian Earl, although both felt deep sympathy for her sorrows.

Each saw that it was impossible to aid her, or to devise any plan for her benefit until they saw the course adopted by Sir Ronald Trevlyn.

The lawyer and soldier both believed he would be led by his mother, and utterly renounce all claim on Lord Earl's adopted daughter; but still to do so would bring on him the scorn of all honest men; and the girl herself was so beautiful, so lovely in her desolate grief, that a faint hope still survived that Sir Ronald would be true to his promised word.

After his interview with Lillian they watched him ride away, and then Mr. Martin sent a message to his destined ward, begging her to allow him a private consultation with her.

The message returned was that Miss Lillian was very tired, and had already retired to rest; early to-morrow morning she would be glad to see Mr. Martin.

"It must be all over!" commented the lawyer to his friend. "Well he must have had a heart as hard as the neiter mill-stone to desert that poor child now. I suppose she is quite broken down, and so refuses to see anyone."

To their surprise Lillian joined them at breakfast the next morning, and it seemed to both that she was less sad than before that interview with Sir Ronald. Her eyes shone with the light of hope, her voice had lost its mournful despair; when the cloth was removed the lawyer himself turned the conversation to his wishes.

"I am going home this afternoon, Miss Lillian, and I want you to come with me! My wife and daughter will give you a warm welcome, and we will try to make you feel at home amongst us."

"And I ask you to remember," put in Cecil Beaumont, with a strange eagerness, "that I am the only living kinsman of the lady you so long believed your mother. I regret to say that I have neither wife nor sister; my mother is too infirm to receive visitors, or it would have given me real pleasure to ask you to make my house your home until your plans were in some degree settled."

Lillian Earl looked steadily at the two men, who, thus in their chivalry, wished to comfort her in her loneliness. She knew they meant just what they said, that had she closed with Mr. Martin's offer she would have been treated by him as an honoured guest.

She sighed deeply. She was wondering why, since these two acquitted her of all blame, and saw in her position only cause for pity, Sir Ronald and his mother thought differently, and even the man who professed to love her as his own soul was ashamed of her.

"You are very kind!" said Lillian, falteringly. "I shall never forget your goodness to me while I live!"

"And you will come!" said Mr. Martin, briskly. "Then I fear you have a busy day before you. I must go up by the five o'clock express—can you be ready by then? You know, of course, that everything that has been called yours—or that the late lord gave you—is yours, indisputably, to remove and retain. It will be impossible to take them all with us to-night, but if you will make a list of the articles I will see that they are forwarded without delay."

"Can I help you?" asked Cecil, kindly. "I am an old soldier, Miss Lillian, and used to making myself of service!"

"I am very much obliged," she said, gently, "but I think I would rather do it quite alone."

"And you will be ready by five o'clock!"

"I will be ready."

She turned to reach the door which Captain Beaumont held open for her. As she passed him he said, simply,—

"Keep up your courage, Miss Lillian! No one in the whole world can think of you with anything but pity. If there be any shame or disgrace in this sorrow it will fall on another head than yours!"

She looked up into his face with swimming eyes, and asked, sadly,—

"Not on papa's! Oh, I could bear anything but that! I should be more miserable than I am, if I thought anyone could lay his goodness to me as a reproach to his memory!"

"I did not mean the shame and disgrace would be Lord Earl's!"

She had left the room, when a sudden impulse seemed to seize her, and she hurried back, meeting the two gentlemen as they stood in the doorway.

"Indeed, indeed!" she cried, passionately, "I am not ungrateful! We may not think alike about Sir Ronald. You have not known him—you cannot understand him as I do, but, indeed, I thank you both for all your kindness to me. While I live I shall never forget it!"

Before they knew her intention she had raised the Captain's hand and pressed it to her lips; then, as she paid the same tribute to Mr. Martin, she murmured, wistfully,—

"I may seem to disappoint you. You may think I spurn your kindness—but do not judge me too harshly. Remember, I have no mother to keep me, and I am so young—hardly nineteen!"

"My dear," said the lawyer, gently, "I shall never judge you harshly, or have hard thoughts of you! But it is eleven o'clock, and indeed you have a busy day before you. You had better go and see to your packing."

To their life's end the two men never forgot that moment, as they stood side by side, with the girl's slight figure before them. Her blue eyes wet with tears; her little hands locked

nervously together; her whole frame trembling with eagerness, as she begged them, whatever happened, not to judge her harshly; but, through all, to think as kindly of her as they could.

Their faith was to be sorely tried—how sorely they little guessed; but though both were keen, shrewd men of the world, their hearts were leal and true, and in spite of the cruel, black cloud so soon to fasten itself upon Lillian, they were faithful to their promise. Never did either of them breathe a harsh word of her—never could they quite believe that she was anything but innocent and true. She lived in their memory, the sweet-faced girl they last saw standing before them in piteous entreaty, her blue eyes moist with tears, the autumn sunshine making a halo round her golden hair.

"It's a sad business," remarked the lawyer, as Lillian disappeared. "It's clear to me the man's a villain; but I'm afraid she doesn't think so, poor girl."

Cecil Beaumont sighed. Never since he lost his cousin Nora had any woman, gentle or simple, had power to stir his heart until to-day. If he had been ten years younger he would have flung himself at Lillian's feet, and begged her to take his name, rank, and fortune; all he had, so that she would let him love her and try to make her happy.

"I wish duels weren't over!" he said, vindictively. "I should like to put a bullet into that heartless scoundrel."

"I expect it is his mother's doing."

The Captain shook his head.

"A man doesn't mind his mother's advice when he's come to the age of Ronald Trevlyn. Besides, Martin, you didn't see so much of him as I did. I went prepared to sympathize with his disappointment; and, hang it, before I had been there ten minutes, I was wondering how Lord Earl could ever have accepted him for a son-in-law."

The morning passed busily enough. Considering it might be a year or more before the new Earl could be found and brought to take possession of his estate, it behoved Mr. Martin to see that things were well looked after in the interval.

The butler and the housekeeper, who had grown grey in the service of the Earls, and who had been left in charge all through the years of the late lord's wanderings, undertook their old responsibility. A few under-servants would remain to assist them; the rest were paid and dismissed at once. The grand apartments, with their lovely furniture muffled in brown holland, were looked up. The blinds of all the chief rooms were lowered, and a sum agreed upon to maintain the place in good condition.

Mr. Martin was a business man, and he got through all this quickly enough before the luncheon bell sounded; anyone might have believed the last six months had been a dream, and that Lord Earl had never ended his foreign wanderings by bringing his adopted darling to the lovely home he fully meant to be her own.

"It's dreary work, sir," said Mrs. Mason, with a tear; "worse than his been seeing the place shut up before. We always had the hope then my lord would come home some day, and live among us, and now—"

"Now you must look forward to his heir, my good woman," said the lawyer, kindly. "It may take a long time to find your master's next-of-kin, but found he shall be some day, and I am quite sure the hope of welcoming the last of the Earls to his own estate will bear you up through the dreary time that is coming."

"And Miss Lillian?" asked the butler, eagerly.

"Oh! Mr. Martin, is it true what they say?"

"What do they say?"

"That our dear young lady is nobody's child, and Sir Ronald Trevlyn—bad luck to him—has broken off his engagement!"

"It is quite true."

"Then he ought to be ashamed of himself."

"I think so, too, Mason, but saying so won't alter things. I am going to take Miss Lillian home with me this afternoon. I've got a daughter much about her age, and my wife is a first-rate hand at making young people happy."

The worthy pair looked at each other and coughed. John made an energetic sign to his

wife, but she declined to be spokeswoman, so at last, rubbing his head reflectively, the old man began,—

"We've been in service a long time, sir, Mary and me—nigh forty years in this family—and we've saved a tidy bit of money, haven't we Mary?"

"Very tidy, indeed, John."

Mr. Martin groaned.

"Don't tell me you're tired of service, and want to start a public-house on your own account after we've made all the arrangements for your staying here."

"No, sir; we'll stay here as long as we're let; only, you see, we've no children, and no particular use for our savings."

It came out then. The simple, kindly couple wanted to bestow their all upon the girl they had thought their mistress. They would gladly have given up every penny of their savings rather than their master's darling should lack the comforts to which she had been bred. The lawyer thought he had rarely heard a more generous offer.

He refused it decidedly. He told them that he was a wealthy man, with only one child, who would soon leave him for a husband's care. He and his wife were prepared to give Lillian an excellent home, and when their own daughter left them the place she had so long occupied in their home. He added that he would himself tell Lillian of their kindness, and if ever she needed help or money he knew she would not be ashamed to apply to those who had spent their life in the service of the Earls.

Lillian did not appear at luncheon, but there was little remarkable in that, considering the amount of packing upon her hands. Mrs. Mason had been assisting her dear young lady, and reported to the gentlemen that Miss Lillian just seemed like one dazed; she had no interest in what was packed or what was left behind; all concern for the future seemed to have left her.

"Poor girl!" commented the Captain. "She will be better anywhere away from here."

Mrs. Mason shook her head mournfully, and returned to her charge.

"Mason, were you very happy when you were going to be married?"

The good woman started. Of all subjects in the world she had least expected Miss Lillian to speak of love or marriage.

"I think I was, miss. You see, John and I had known each other since we was boy and girl, and I knew I could trust him to be good to me, come what would."

Lillian left the dresses she was folding, and sat down on the sofa trembling from head to foot.

"You're just tired out, miss. I'd better finish off these boxes, and you just rest a bit on the sofa."

"I think I will go out," the air will do me good, and, Mason, I must say good-bye to the place. I may never see it again. Before I go, I must just see where they have laid papa."

For the village churchyard sloped down to the Earlsmere grounds, and only the still, cool waters of the river Mere separated the two. A little rustic bridge had been built across it for the convenience of some dead-and-gone Lord Earl and his family.

"You'd better not, Miss Lillian; it'll be too much for you; and as to not seeing the place again, why Mr. Martin sure to bring you some day. He seems a right, kind gentleman, miss. I can understand now how your poor papa trusted him so well."

But Lillian persisted. She took a light basket on her arm, which Mason concluded was full of flowers to strew upon the new-made grave. She threw a scarf round her shoulders, and put on a broad-brimmed hat.

"And so you knew John ever since you can remember!" said the girl, suddenly, as though Mrs. Mason had only just made the statement. "And you've been married forty years. Were you ever sorry, Mason?"

The old woman marvelled at the question, but she answered it very promptly.

"Never once, Miss Lillian. A woman never is sorry she's married unless she has a bad husband. Heaven help her then, poor creature!"

Lillian threw her arms round the housekeeper's neck, and kissed her fondly; when the old woman could look up the girl had vanished, and her own face was wet with the young lady's tears.

The carriage had been ordered soon after four, for it was a long drive to the railway station; the luggage was in its place, and the gentlemen had waited some minutes without any sign of Lillian's coming, when Mr. Martin asked the old housekeeper if the young lady would be long.

"I thought she was here, sir. I have not seen her since she went out."

"Went out?"

"She said she must say good-bye to the place, sir. I thought perhaps she had gone to the churchyard."

There was another train at six.

Neither of the travellers, fumed or vexed at the unexpected delay.

Mr. Martin directed the carriage to meet him at the front entrance to the church. He knew enough of the place to tell that if he walked through the grounds to the churchyard, aroused Lillian, and they both joined the carriage there, very little time would be lost.

He was not an irresolute or nervous man. In general he never shrank from a disagreeable duty, but on this occasion some strange impulse made him turn to Captain Beaumont.

"Come with me, Cecil."

In perfect silence the two men walked through the pleasant gardens to the rustic gate which led to the river's bank—the bridge was nearly opposite it.

The recent rain had swollen the river, and its waters now looked "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue," as they swept past in a rapid current.

The Mere is one of the loveliest rivers in that part of Blankshire, but neither of the two headed its beauty; they were looking at three homely objects lying on the bank—a broad-brimmed hat, a plain black scarf, and a light basket half-filled with flowers.

An awful presentiment came to them both that the girl who was nobody's daughter, whose love Sir Ronald had flung from him in scorn because she was poor and nameless, had sought for herself a home and forgetfulness in those deep, blue waters.

Mr. Martin had seen many a solemn sight, had heard many a tale of misery, but nothing had ever touched his heart more than the scene before him.

He looked at his friend, and saw that the soldier was sobbing like a little child.

"How could he!" cried Cecil Beaumont, brokenly. "The cruel, heartless scoundrel. The sin of suicide is his, not hers, for he drove her to it, as surely as though he had put a cup of poison to her lips and made her drain it to the dregs. Oh, why are such mean, pitiful creatures allowed to breathe! I shall never think of Ronald Trevlyn but as Lillian's destroyer. A curse on him now and for ever! A curse upon his present and his future! May this afternoon's work haunt him to his dying day, and her fair, sad face trouble him even in his dreams!"

CHAPTER VI.

GERALD CARROTHERS, Earl of Leigh, was one of the proudest noblemen of the day; but when he stood on the threshold of that gloomy house in the narrow street leading from the Tottenham Court-road, he took Mrs. Hall's horny hand in his as respectfully as though she had been a countess, as he thanked her for her kindness to the sweet-faced, sad young lodger whom he believed to have been in very truth his wife.

"It was not much I could do, sir," said the poor woman, simply. "Mrs. Carr was too proud to let me help her. She just seemed to get thinner and sadder every day; and at last one morning, when I think she had spent all she had in the world, she just sat down and wrote a letter. When it was posted she seemed to watch all day long for an answer. Three long days passed and it never came. I was busy myself at that time, and I didn't see much of her; but we

never had a wry word—never; and I'm sure I'd never have asked her for the bit of money she owed me; but I came home one night and I just found a bit of paper telling me she'd gone. She couldn't bear to stay, she said, and know she'd never be able to pay me."

Gerald's face was white with pain.

"And you have never seen her since?"

"Never! Many's the time I thought of her, sir. There are some faces you see one can't forget, but from that day to this I never heard a word of Mrs. Carr or her baby."

"Her baby! Then the child was born alive?"

"It wasn't born when she left me, sir, but it was coming. I've often thought it would have been a mercy if the poor young thing was taken then. You see, sir, she was so pretty and so delicate. She wasn't fit to take care of herself, much less of a child. It seemed as if, big as the great world is, there was no place for her and her baby."

And it was then that the Earl shook hands with Mrs. Hall, leaving a golden sovereign in her horny palm. And then he went back to his luxurious home, feeling he would give it all up—man, servants, riches, and grandeur—rescues them all, oh! so gladly, if his sweet, young wife could be restored to him—if he could know for certain the story of his darling's fate.

It was in vain after that that society smiled upon Lord Leigh—that young ladies showed him plainly they were willing to share his coronet. The Earl was proof against their charms.

Between him and a second marriage there stood always the memory of his girl-wife, the fair, young creature who had been content to think the world well lost for love's sake only.

And while Lord Leigh lived in the gay world of London life, with all its pleasures spread out for his acceptance within the same great wilderness, there struggled bravely onwards a girl, whose sweet, wistful face grew sadder as the days passed, for whom no pleasures offered, whose society no one courted, and for whom—like the Earl's young wife and her little child—there seemed, indeed, no place in this great cruel world.

Lillian Earl was too true and innocent to take her life with her own hand.

Up to an hour of the time fixed for her own departure from Earlsmere she had quite meant to yield to Sir Ronald Trevyn's importunity, and become his wife privately, since it seemed his fortune did not permit of his claiming her in any other fashion; but as she talked to the old housekeeper, and heard Mrs. Mason's simple definition of love, it broke on Lillian with a bitter pain that Ronald did not love her; that, if he were ashamed to marry her now in the face of all the world, he would be as much ashamed afterwards to confess that she was his wife.

By a rapid decision the girl chose her own fate. She would be no burden upon her lover. He should think her dead, and so feel himself entirely free. The two true, generous friends who had offered her their aid should imagine her as asleep beneath the tranquil waters of the river, safe from all sin and suffering. No one who had known Lord Earl's petted child should learn that she was in the wide world of London life, a toiler for daily bread.

Of course, in the excitement and trouble caused by the sight which met Captain Beaumont and his friend at the river brink, they postponed their journey to London until the next day.

There was no voice to tell them that late that evening a slight, weary figure reached a station ten miles distant from Earlsmere, and took a humble third-class ticket for the great metropolis.

When Lillian stood upon the bustling platform of the London terminus, a little lonely wail, she had much ado to keep from crying, but the consciousness of how much depended on her own exertions kept her calm. It was getting late, but shops did not close very early in that neighbourhood, so the late helress proceeded to make her purchases, for some subtle instinct told her that a woman without luggage must be regarded with suspicion.

She bought only the most needful things. Already she was dreading what might happen when her little stock of money was exhausted. They barely filled the small portmanteau she had chosen for its cheapness, but they gave her at least the appearance of respectability, and it was mainly through them that a buxom, fresh-coloured landlady ultimately consented to receive her as an inmate.

A small bedroom at the top of the house for six shillings a week! It was very humble shelter for the heiress of Earlsmere, but at least it was clean and tidy.

Mrs. Mathews looked sharply at her new inmate as they concluded the bargain, Lillian tendering a week's rent in advance instead of references.

"What name shall I put in the receipt, miss?"

The new lodger turned white as death. It was questions such as this which brought home to her all the misery of her position. She knew she was not Miss Earl, but up to that moment she had never thought how she was to be called.

A chance trifle settled the point. The paper on the wall of her attic, the blind at the tiny window, the threadbare carpet—all were of one prevailing hue, and Lillian in her perplexity seized on the colour of her abode as her new name.

It was common; it would provoke no questions. There were hundreds of Greens in England. The most inquisitive person could hardly demand to which of them she was related.

"Miss Green."

The landlady appeared satisfied and withdrew. For more than a month she kept her lodger, and had no reason to complain. Week by week Miss Green's six shillings were forthcoming. She gave no trouble, uttered no word of grumbling, and if she grew paler and thinner day by day, if the light of hope gradually died out of her eyes, that was hardly the fault of Mrs. Mathews and her back attic.

Lillian was not idle in that time. She sought employment feverishly—desperately. She haunted the offices which profess to find situations for governesses, she answered every likely advertisement in the newspapers, but nothing came of it. She was too pretty to please would-be employers, and the account she gave of herself was too lame.

"She had been educated abroad, and her father's death had made her obliged to earn her own living. She had no relations or friends in England. She could offer no references."

People who had listened till then turned away at the last word. One or two, more uncharitable than the rest, told the girl point-blank she must be nothing better than an adventurer to dare to confess to such a thing, and so the time wore on.

Every morning she started on her weary toll. Generally about one o'clock she got a bun by way of dinner at one of the city shops which combine the business of pastrycook and restaurant. It was a cheap refreshment, for besides the bun her penny procured for her a sight of two or three daily papers. Day after day she went there, until the young woman behind the counter grew to expect her, and to regard her as much of a regular customer as the gentlemen who came every morning for their sherry and bitters.

She never spoke to any of her fellow-customers, she never knew they noticed her; but one day she was to be undeceived. In turning over the *Times* to find the advertisements she came upon a short paragraph which made her head swim, and brought the tears to her lovely eyes. It was very short and simple, being merely a notice to the heirs of the late Lord Earl that a considerable fortune was awaiting their acceptance; but the sight of the familiar name was too much for Lillian. She reeled and would have fallen but that a hand was laid supportingly upon her shoulder, and a voice said kindly,—

"This close shop has upset you; come out into the air, you will be better there."

Almost unconsciously she obeyed the advice; the gentleman who had spoken led her out of the shop and then turned with her down one of these quiet narrow streets which are to be found so often near our crowded thoroughfares. In this case it led to the Embankment, and he guided

her footsteps until he could place her on one of the benches which stand there.

Lillian expected he would leave her, but, to her surprise, he kept his position, while, overcome by the shock, her long pent-up grief had its way. She sobbed until she stopped from sheer exhaustion.

"What is the matter?"

He was quite young, not more than five or six-and-twenty, but he spoke with a certain authority as though he meant to have an answer; he had had to fight life's battle himself, and found it a pretty hard one, but he had never seen a woman in distress without trying to help her.

"I cannot tell you," she said, simply; "I am better now, thank you very much."

He sat down beside her.

"You are not going to defend me like that, I hope. You know we are not quite strangers; we have lunched together for weeks; believe me, and the deep voice softened with a rare charm, 'two heads are better than one. I mayn't be able to help you much, but I will do my best.'"

She shook her head.

"There are some sorrows past cure," and he touched her black dress; "but others can be soothed by sympathy. Do you know I have watched you day after day growing thinner and sadder, and I have often wanted to speak to you before, only I thought it would offend you."

Lillian gave him one brief beam of gratitude.

"You really noticed that! I thought there was no one to care now. You see, and oh! how sadly the girl spoke, 'this world is very big, but yet there's no room for me.'"

"I shouldn't think you wanted much room," he said, half comically, "what do you wish for?"

"Something to do."

Guy Alnall looked at her as though he was wondering what she was fitted for.

"And is there no one to help you—haven't you got any relations?"

"No."

"Nor friends?"

"No—and oh, I had better tell you all; I haven't even got any references. I shirk that is why no one will try me."

"No references!" as though he were weighing the obstacle. "Well, if you have no friends I don't see how you could be expected to have references. I need not ask you what you want to be; of course, you'd say a governess, everyone does now-a-days. Do you know I think I can help you!"

"Yes!"

"Well, I haven't got any children to be taught," and he smiled again; "but I happen to possess a sister who keeps a school, and if I send you to her she might be able to suggest something."

"But—"

"But what?"

"You don't know me!"

"I have seen you pretty often, and that—"

"And you can trust me without references!"

"I think so. Do you know, to my idea, the very fact of your confessing to having none proves you can't be a very black sheep. You see references are so very easily fabricated now-a-days that an unscrupulous person will invent them without thinking twice on the subject."

Lillian stared.

"Really!"

"I wonder you never thought of it!"

"I couldn't!" and the blue eyes were full of perplexity; "why it would be like telling lies!"

"That is not so very uncommon!"

He rose then, and took out his card-case; he scribbled an address on it hastily, and then asked,—

"Do you know Leckenhall?"

Lillian confessed her ignorance.

"You take a train from Ludgate Hill to Leckenhall, and our house is about ten minutes' walk from the station, anyone will direct you," and then, without another word, he turned away, raising his hat as politely as though the shabby stranger had been a duchess.

Lillian felt as if she was in a dream. After weeks of rebuffs and snubs it was very sweet to have a taste of the milk of human kindness shown her once again. She wondered if her

benefactor's sister were anything like himself. And then she rose and walked to Ludgate Hill with more hope than she had felt for a long time. Lockenham was easily reached, and Rose Bank as easily discovered. It was a pretty house approached by a carriage drive—as are all the houses in Lockenham. There was no intimation of its being a school, and Lillian began to fear she had made a mistake, when the door suddenly opened and a group of bright-faced girls made their egress, laughing and chattering the while. Thus encouraged our heroine rang the bell, and informed the smart young housemaid that she wished to speak to Miss Ainslie.

There was no difficulty; she was ushered at once across the hall into a small room, half library, half study, where a bright fire burnt cozily in the grate and a tray of tea-things stood temptingly on the table. She gave the servant Mr. Ainslie's card, and tried to hope his sister might be like him.

Another five minutes and she could answer the question for herself. "Not the least in the world, so far as appearance went," for Miss Ainslie was very small and slight, with bright, black eyes that looked you through and through, and rather a sharp expression of face, as though she were used to reading people's character, and was rarely deceived.

It was getting dark now. The short winter's day was closing in. The lady stirred the fire into a bright blaze before she spoke to her visitor.

"I hope I am not dreadfully rude, but I don't think I have ever seen you before."

"Never," said Lillian, rather taken aback at her abruptness. "I hardly know how to excuse my coming to you."

"My brother sent you, didn't he?"

"Yes. He thought you would help me."

"I always redeem Guy's promises!" and the plain face grew beautiful with its kindness, "because I can trust him not to make rash ones. Now, what can I do for you?"

Lillian explained, simply, that she was alone in the world, and there was no one to help her to earn her own living.

Miss Ainslie looked at her sharply.

"And you know no one?"

"I know no one to whom I could apply."

"Then you have had friends and quarrelled with them. Hadn't you better make it up? Teaching's hard work."

Lillian shook her head.

"It cannot be harder than waiting! Oh, Miss Ainslie, I think the cruellest thing in the world is waiting! Day after day to try, and always to fail, crushes the life out of one!"

"Then you are not afraid of work?"

"I would rather work than wear my life out in an aimless, useless existence!"

"I like that," said Miss Ainslie, frankly.

"What can you do?"

Lillian told her frankly.

She sat down to the piano when the lamp came, and played one of Mozart's sonatas. She answered her hostess in French and Italian. She proved that she was intelligent and rarely accomplished.

Kate Ainslie felt intensely surprised. She poured out the tea almost in silence. Not until Lillian had eaten and drunk did she say,—

"I think I can help you, Miss Green. Only first I must ask you one question. If I knew your whole history is there anything in it that would make me refuse to aid you?"

Lillian never hesitated.

"I have injured no one. I have had a crushing sorrow, and I may have been impatient under it; but I have done nothing to make me unfit to instruct the purest children in England!"

For three minutes there was silence, then Miss Ainslie said,—

"And you could bring yourself to go into the country, to live miles away from any town—about up in a dull schoolroom?"

"Thankfully!"

"You could bear to live with people not noted for their consideration? People who think a governess beneath them; and that all gratitude for her care of their little ones is dispensed with

by a quarterly cheque! You think you could bear that sort of life?"

"I can bear anything that is honest!"

"Then I think you may consider yourself engaged as governess to Lady Dacres. She was once a pupil of my own, and is good enough to declare that I am the fittest person to choose a sovereign for her schoolroom!"

"And you think she will have me?"

"She will have whomever I send. Perhaps I ought not to select one of whom I know so little; but you possess all the needed accomplishments, and very few people who do so are willing to exile themselves for nine months in one year, which is what accepting this situation means. I will write to Lady Dacres to-night, and if you will give me your address I will let you know her reply."

Lillian gave the address. Lord Earl's adopted child had no false pride. She was poor, and it was no disgrace to her that she lived in a poor locality.

Kate Ainslie, who knew London well, guessed a little how hardly things had gone with Miss Green, from the very fact of her lodging in Whitley-street, S.W.

She made no comment, only when Lillian rose she took her hand very kindly, and said in the sharp way which lost all its sting when accompanied by her smile,—

"Do you know, Miss Green, my brother is never mistaken in a fact! The people he trusts always repay that trust! I look to you that Lady Dacres is not disappointed with my recommendation!"

"She shall not be if I can help it!"

And then the lonely wait—the nameless orphan girl—passed out from that warm, bright fire-side into the cold, dark gloom of the winter's evening.

(To be continued.)

FOUND WANTING.

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CHAPTER XVI.

REACHING her room, Christine stood for a few minutes with her hand pressed against her forehead. The coming out into the hall where the sunlight poured through the wide open door, the sounds of daily life in the house had given that scene in the drawing-room the likeness of a dream. It seemed out of the realm of things actual, and she herself another personality—not Christine Delmar—leaving this home for ever. Was this the end of it all then?

She dropped her hand and moved a step forward, looking up to a large photograph that hung on the wall before her. The pictured eyes looked back at her grave and unsmiling, as they had looked at her every day for this last year. Often and often she had stood here and wished she had power to soften that proud, unhappy face; now the wish had gone. She turned away. Already her resolute mind had formed some idea of her movements, and she rang the bell for her maid.

The maid had been with her in her school-days and was deeply attached to her. She was not surprised at her mistress's announcement that she was going to London to her brother's for a few days, for she often left home with no more notice than this. Fanny proceeded to put together a few things in a small portmanteau, only asking if she should accompany her, as she had done before.

"I may be longer than a few days, Fanny," said Christine.

"Well, ma'am, all the more reason why I should wait on you. Mrs. Clifford can't spare her maid much."

"You must be ready in half an hour," said the young mistress, "and if you cannot you must follow me. Tell James to have the pony-chaise ready in that time, and you be there also. Now go, please."

The maid retired, and as she opened the door

to go out in rushed Colin, springing on his mistress, in boisterous delight at having found her. Christine threw her arms round him as if he had been a child.

"Colin, dear old Colin!" she said, pressing her face against his shaggy coat—"you break my heart! What will you say when I am gone? I am going, Colin—I am never coming back—never."

"Yes, you are," said Colin's beautiful eyes, fixed on her face with that intent, half-human look dogs wear sometimes, perhaps, in his dim canine understanding, wondering why his mistress kissed him again and again so earnestly. Then she led him gently from the room; she could bear it no longer.

A few special treasures she put in the portmanteau, locked it, and then went to a desk standing on a side-table. With steady hand she wrote a few lines to her husband, signed them simply "Christine," as if she could not put on paper the name she wished she had never borne, and as steadily put on hat and gloves. She forgot nothing she wanted to do; she moved here and there with the slow subdued movements of a person fearing a return of physical pain, but there was no falter, not a second's pause. Perhaps she had no distinct power of considering future consequences, yet she remembered to provide for immediate needs. She knew the housekeeper was out—she left a written message for her that the servants might not for the present think anything amiss. What else remained to be done now she was ready to go! She looked round the room she had entered a bride a year ago—such high hopes then! She recalled them calmly, without a tear, with perfect self-possession. She could not feel—she was too stunned; she could not even say farewell to this room where she had thought, had suffered, and hoped, and prayed a whole long year; she could only stand and gaze round blankly.

She went out by another door, she could not see Colin again, nor did she go to see her piano; she could not enter that drawing-room—she shuddered as she hurried past it.

She met Fanny in the hall, the girl went up for the portmanteau, and as she came down and handed it to the servant, Christine held out to her the note for Delmar.

"Will you put that on the study table?" she said—"where your master will see it—he—he did not know I should go to-day."

She went to the carriage quickly, stepped in, and as Fanny joined her they drove off. Twenty minutes afterwards the London train left the station.

For hours the old house lay bathed in the warm light—not a sound from within, and no living creature about it save the dog lying watchful on the threshold between the great stands of flowers. Once or twice a pedestrian passed, and paused to look at the beautiful gardens and the quaint irregular house, and to envy the owner of them, and, perhaps, asked the first person he met what name the place bore.

But the long, hot day came to a close—the trees began to cast their shadows on to the white road beyond the gates; the road itself as it stretched away looked less dusty and glaring; a subdued light crept softly over every object; the hush of a summer's evening had fallen on the vivid glory of the day. From far away on the river faint sounds of voices and laughter came, but even these ceased as the hours went on, and the gold and crimson faded from the sky.

It was near ten when a boat came slowly towards the house, the rower evidently using his oars in so listless a fashion that he must surely be pretty well exhausted. The still water just rippled over the blades that hours ago had flashed in and out like diamonds. A solitary speck on the dark river, the boat came on to the Danceswood steps; there the rower threw his sculls down, stepped out, and fastened the painter, then paused, looking towards the house. But one light gleamed from it through the trees, and that one from his own study window. Its level rays shined steadily into the darkness seemed to solve the difficulty that had occurred to him with the force of a shock directly he put his foot on land.

How was he to meet Christine! What manner of greeting, what form of words could pass between them! For he was not like a man of but one nature—and that evil, good and evil in him were over at war, and in his heart of hearts there was a deep shame that made him dread to see his wife. The unlighted house showed him she must be in her own sitting room, which overlooked the road. Still, as he crossed the lawn the question came to him again—on what terms could they meet now!

In his utter exhaustion, mental and physical, he was able to think more clearly—his mind was cooler if still unsubdued. He went into the study, and tossing his white cap to the other end of the room, sat down.

He never remembered in his whole life to have felt such deadly fatigue—rest seemed impossible; he thought he could never know it again. It was an effort to rise and open the door, when he heard Colin's unmistakable whine.

The dog's manner was strange. He generally greeted his master by jumping on him with his paws on his breast; but as Delmar admitted him he stood still, looking up wistfully in his face, plainly asking for something.

"What's the matter, old fellow!" said Delmar, stroking his head.

In reply, Colin only waved his tail slowly as a sort of acknowledgment of the caress, and looked still more wistful. Delmar felt a vague, cold fear. He understood dogs too well to fail to see that something was the matter—but what!

He was too weary to try and find out, and in turning from the dog his eye fell on the note lying on his desk addressed to himself. Christine's hand! What did it mean! He broke it open in his own impetuous way, without a moment's pause, read the few lines, and laid it down again, with a shaking hand. Passion had reached that white heat for which there is no outlet. He could not have spoken, and no words or act would have been a relief. There was something pitiable in such impotence. D-died—his name a byword—the man was in an agony. Then he rallied—she could not dare—she had written that in the first rush, perhaps had gone, but come back, and forgotten the note. He went outside, took up a small lamp from the hall-table, and went upstairs, the dog following him.

The rooms were empty—he would have known they were empty if he had gone in blindfolded; the lace curtains stirred mournfully in the night wind, blowing through the wide-open windows; a dressing-gown was flung on a chair; a book of devotion lay open on the prayer-desk as it had last been used.

He went out again, closing the door softly, laying his hand for an instant on the key as if he would look it, but changed his mind, and again entered his study, still with Colin at his side. He took Christine's letter up, seeming about to tear it, but did not—instead, opening his desk and taking from it the faded rosebud he had put there months ago.

All this time the white teeth were set, and the delicate brows knitted. Was he going at last to destroy that flower because Christine had given it—Christine who had risked her name and his! Once more he put it back, because he had promised to keep it—perhaps, too, from a feeling that lay too vague and deep for him to discern then—a clasping of hands with the free spirit that would not brook wrong or subjection.

With the flower he put the letter. Then he tried to think. She would come back—her brother himself would urge her—for of course she had gone there. No girl of nineteen could stand out against the talk of the world. He should not follow her—he should wait. Whatever she had said to the servants—and that he would find out to-morrow—would last for a short while; but if she had not returned by then, those pretences would fall to the ground.

Through all this there was an undercurrent of conviction that she could have acted in no other way after what he had told her, and a sense of relief that he had not to face her just now.

Those accusing, scornful eyes haunted him; he did not want to see them again. Let her go—he did not care so long as there was no scandal—no talk; he cared, save for that, for nothing

in Heaven or earth. He was not tamed yet; deeper waters than even these must flow over the stubborn soul that would not give up its sin; he must suffer a thousand times all he had suffered yet.

Through the night he sat before his desk, with his fair head bowed on his folded arms, and the dog crouched sleepless by his side.

CHAPTER XVII.

THAT evening Pelham Clifford sat alone in his well-lighted private room, reading, or rather, at the time we see him, he was not reading, but thinking.

Maddie had gone immediately after dinner to see a friend a few doors off; and although she had said she would not be ten minutes, had already been half-an-hour, and was likely to be as long again.

So Pelham, eschewing the stately loneliness of the drawing-room, had retreated to his own sanctum, and, meaning to enjoy the luxury of reading a favourite classic author, was, instead, indulging in the more doubtful luxury of thought. For thought, especially if it is retrospective, is nine times out of ten disagreeable, and Pelham's were decidedly so; for now that his own breach of faith had recoiled on his sister, he regretted it, even though it had given him Maddie. And it must be confessed that at times Maddie, with all her prettiness and sweetness, did not seem altogether a compensation for broken honour, and Christine's unhappiness. Pelham was not distinctly conscious of such a feeling; he would have denied it if charged with it, and denied it honestly; but there it was. And the woman whom for such sin has been committed must be a very rare one, indeed, if such a feeling never arises in her husband's heart. Maddie was anything but rare, and so the beginning of the end had come. A voice without—a servant's—roused him.

"Yes, ma'am," said the voice, speaking to someone outside, "she is out and my master is alone."

The door was opened, and Pelham rose quickly, it must be Christine, for the servants never admitted anyone else to this room.

He stepped forward with an exclamation—"My dearest child, how jolly of you to come, but how late you are!" and paused abruptly as Christine half-fung herself into his arms.

His heart grew cold with a nameless fear; for this passionate clinging to him, this silence, what did it mean! Even while he debated what to say, what to ask, whether to soothe her agitation or to let it have its way, Christine solved his doubts by lifting herself, not calm, but resolute to force herself into some semblance of calm. Yet the white cheek and the over-bright eye looked as if the spirit were too wrought up to keep self-command long.

She pulled off her hat and gloves, as if the commonplace action were some help in keeping her balance. Clifford looked at her gravely, and she, glancing up, caught his eye. Her lip quivered. She could not unfasten one of the buttons of her glove, and held out her hand to him silently. It was no wonder her fingers failed her, for she was trembling from head to foot. He drew off the glove gently, bending down to her.

"What does it all mean, my little sister!"

She stood absolutely still, as if bracing herself up, and then answered him,—

"It means—that I am your sister only once more."

She moved away from him, her cheeks were burning now. Clifford followed her, staying her by his hand on her shoulder.

"What have you been doing, or, rather, what has Delmar been doing to have driven you to this!" he said sternly, "for I cannot misunderstand you. You have left him and come to me to claim the protection and shelter I, as your brother, can give you."

"He will not come here," she said under her breath.

Clifford fell back. "Why do you say so—what do you know!" he said, with that terrible fear

making the blood in his veins like ice. It had over-mastered him and put itself into words—words that he would fain have recalled the next minute.

"Has he ever come to this house!" she said, not noticing anything strange either in his question or the manner of it at the time. "I know the reason now. And if he came, not he, nor even you, could change me. You think me wrong, Pelham—you are terrified at what the world may say. Well, I care nothing for the world—let it judge me. For your blame I do care, but I will endure it rather than go back."

"I do not blame you—I cannot without knowing the whole. I know, I have known for a long time, that you have not been happy. It has been a grief to me that has poisoned every day and night—but I own I do fear my sister's name being thrown from one reckless hand to the other. You have done wisely to come here at once. But tell me all, Christine."

"You have a right to know—something at least—the right of love, if none other. I knew months ago he had never loved me—I thought once he had. I cannot tell you what my life has been—a living death. I have borne it so long, and then I found out—no matter how—I hardly know myself—that he had deceived me. Another—no, not another—for she was the only love—well, she stood between us. He told me to-day."

Clifford had shaded his face with his hands, while in hurried, rapid accents Christine poured out these incoherent words—stopping abruptly here and there, as if it was a hard task to tell her miserable story.

"An old love!" said Pelham slowly. "Well, so many men might plead guilty to that. Is that unpardonable!"

"Oh! no, no!" cried the girl, passionately.

"I would have pardoned that. Have I not known it, I tell you, for months! I would have pardoned his falseness, his neglect; all but that one thing. That I will never forgive!"

"What thing?" asked Clifford, startled. "I cannot understand you. My darling,"—and he took her hands in his, forcing her to stand quiet—"think well—a thousand times, before you refuse to return. Think whether you can maintain your position—weigh well what that position is—the hardest, the most equivocal. Is it impossible you two can be reconciled! Only a past love between you! Cannot you, for the sake of your name, sink your pride, just as it is! He does not love you, but he may—your eyes say so. In Heaven's name, child! what do you mean!"

The girl bent her face down on his hands with a long, quivering breath.

"Oh!" she said, "what utter misery it is!"

Clifford stood quite still, incapable of speech, or even movement. He was tortured with the very torture he had laid on another man, and the blow he had dealt had fallen on himself. Not a dead love only stood between this cherished sister and her husband—and Christine knew it.

A tangled web it seemed from beginning to end—a web he had begun to weave with very light thought of anything but his own gain and anyone but himself, and other hands had taken the delicate fibres and weaved them as they listed and drawn them under his feet and Christine's.

"I thought that folly had been forgotten," he said at last, when he could trust his voice. "I never dreamed, when your letter came, that he had not put that away altogether. Oh!" he said, with a bitter remorse she could not fathom then, "what a worse than fool I have been!"

"No, dear Pelham," said the girl, gently. "Why lay blame on yourself! You could not know—you could not but think that he had forgotten. I have pains you, I know. I scarcely know what I said."

"Hush! darling, it does not matter," said Clifford, tenderly. "I cannot have you bear one iota more. But is it this you will never forgive—because it is not a past love!"

"No, no—again no! Even that I would have borne. Must I tell you all! You will understand, then, why to forgive would be such deadly shame." She pressed her hands on her temples in an agony of doubt.

To lower Albert in her brother's eyes—as he had been lowered in her own—she shrank from it infinitely. Yet how else convince Pelham that reconciliation was not to be thought of? She began low and falteringly, afraid to look at her listener,—

"I don't think he was speaking falsely—he believes it all—only he has been mistaken. He said you had come between him and Maddie"—Pelham controlled an exclamation—"and he had sworn revenge."

Clifford broke into a hard laugh.

"Revenge! he is long in taking it!"

"Is he?" said Delmar's wife, looking up.

"Good Heaven!" was all Clifford said, sinking into a chair, and covering his face.

The girl knelt beside him, trying to draw away his hands.

"Pelham—dear Pelham," she whispered, in her sweet winning way, "don't think of me—don't think of me—don't grieve for me. I did not believe it—not for one instant. I knew you could do no such wrong."

"You did not believe it!" repeated Clifford, with an eager, half-incredulous look into the beautiful face. Alas! his faith even in her had been poisoned by his own tarnished faith. "Then what did you think had parted them?"

"Not Albert," said the girl, drooping her head. "I thought Maddie—"

"Ah, true," interrupted Maddie's husband, hurriedly—not willingly, not without a flush of shame; "but there was no blame exactly—love was more on his side than hers—only a girl's fancy, you know, and so I— He dared not add the lie. "I, knowing nothing, won her—not with those clear, trusting eyes on his face, not with the light touch of the clasped hands on his knees. He bent his head down on hers, and Christine, nestling to him, though she understood all that was in his heart as clearly as she did her own—and her own was only half comprehended. "So you see, I cannot go back," she whispered, after that silence.

"No!"

"You will not tell Maddy?"

Again "No!"

Maddie's high treble in the hall, and Delmar's young wife sprang to her feet, half wildly,—

"Oh! don't let her come," she said, scarcely knowing what she uttered—"not to-night!"

"She never comes here, dear," said Pelham, soothing her. "My poor child—you are over-taxed—you must rest. Did you come alone, or with Fanny? Then I will send her to you, only first you must have some refreshment."

"No," said the girl, stopping him as he went to the bell. "I cannot—it would choke me. I will go up to my own room; and to-morrow I will see Maddy." Then she came to him, and put her soft arms about him, clinging to him. "Oh, Pelham, you won't let this change us—you and me? I will try to love her—for your sake."

"My own Christine, nothing—nothing shall make us less to each other," was Clifford's answer, as he kissed her again and again; and as she went from the room he thanked Heaven that the peril was past; and there flashed into his mind the unbidden thought, "Is Maddy's love worth the loss of hers?"

CHAPTER XVII

CLIFFORD did not immediately seek his wife. There was an instinctive shrinking from the unsympathetic nature, not meant for the tragedies of life. But as tragedies of some sort come into so many lives, women like Maddy naturally are not turned to for help or sympathy when they occur. Besides, there was another and lower feeling actuating him. Maddy seemed the very beginner of what Christine had truly called "after misery."

He was too overwhelmed to be as just as a man should be—if one is to take men's view of the gifts of their sex. He laid blame on himself, true, but a great deal on her also—he, who had told her that she did no wrong in breaking her troth!

Delmar's mode of revenge had certainly been well chosen. The man who had injured him was touched in his most vulnerable points—his dearest and best was wounded, and his own dishonour stared him mockingly in the face.

So much had come out Christine had never been meant to know, he thought, in terror; what was to prevent her knowing the whole truth one day? He was but staving off that day by the lies he had uttered—by his mean sheltering under Maddy's sin.

"It is all cursed folly and wretchedness, from beginning to end!" he said, finishing his soliloquy aloud. "Who would have thought the fellow had such a black heart under that fair face of his—to hold his hand, to say not one word of reproach—to go out of our lives as if he were dead—and then to silently work out this revenge! I always hated him—he was always before me. I would give all I possess if my hands were not so tied! No wonder he wanted no delay in the marriage!" He stopped and listened. "Post! there is Maddy!"

Poor Maddy! He had never wished her anywhere else till now. She came running downstairs—what should make her feet ever go wearily!—and opened the door of the study.

"Pelham—aren't you coming up? I've got such a lot to tell you."

"Don't worry me now, Maddy," said he, irritably.

"Dear me—what is the matter?" said she, advancing into the room. "Has your valet given you warning?" Clifford turned from her impatiently. Her frivolity seemed intolerable, and he felt savage—unjustly, of course. "Why," said Maddy, picking up a glove from the floor, "whose is this?—not mine. I never put on my gloves here."

"It's—Christine's," said Pelham, abruptly.

"She is here."

"Christine! and gone again!—I am so sorry I have missed her."

The genius feeling diminished his vexation. He spoke and looked more like himself as he told Maddy briefly of what had happened, assigning no reason for Christine's act save the want of affection.

Maddy listened in surprise, and was sincerely sorry, in spite of the little throb of something very like satisfaction. It had not escaped her that in Pelham's tone, when speaking of Delmar, there was unusual bitterness, and she drew her own conclusions from it. There was something not altogether unpleasant in feeling she had such power.

"But she'll have to go back," said she. Perhaps she might act as the generous mediator between the man who had been her lover and his wife—whom he could not love; magnanimously persuade him to be reconciled to the wife who had no power, and then do a little of the "Bless ye, my children." It looked so pretty. "She can't stand out against everyone!"

"No one will attempt to persuade her to return," said Pelham, annoyed at Maddy's tone.

"Then I shall. Of course it's all nonsense about the reason. She wouldn't have rushed away like that without some overt provocation," said Maddy, shrewdly. "Really, it would be rather awkward meeting Christine. It was a pity Delmar had ever come into the family."

"He'd give her plenty, I daresay," said Clifford, with a sneer, trying to turn her aside from the point.

"No," said Maddy, coolly. "I believe auntie was prejudiced. Albert wasn't the sinner she tried to make him out."

"Let him alone, for Heaven's sake! I hate to hear the sound of his name!" said Clifford, angrily.

Her eyes sparkled.

"What for? I expect Christine has taken offence at something, and he's not so much to blame. When the storm has blown over they can be good friends again. I'm sure I'd do anything I could to help them."

"You! the last person under the sun! Christine has not been hasty, as you imply. It is Delmar's fault—curses him!"

"Pelham!"

"I beg your pardon a thousand times," said Clifford. "Christine shall never go back to him with my consent."

"How wildly you talk, Pelham! What do you imagine people will say! You really ought to use your influence as her brother; or, perhaps, I—"

"Might use your influence with Albert, I suppose!"

"Well," said she, serene in proportion to his rising temper, "of course there is no denying I used to be able to do a good deal with him; and whatever influence I have now I am sure there would be no harm in using for such a good end."

"He is not coming near you—understand that; and you are not to say a word to Christine about the subject. The child shall have some protection. I won't have her worried—some of you women can never give up your power."

Maddy drew herself up with an offended air, much mitigated by her husband's angry acknowledgment of a pleasing fact.

But he had never before spoken to her like this; and she was not grateful to the innocent cause of it, though her jealousy of her had cooled in the last half-hour, and she thought of her as "poor" Christine.

"You needn't be angry," said she; "I think it is I who ought to be angry, for I can see you and Christine have the real secret between you; she hasn't left him only because he doesn't love her. She has found something out, and has just rushed off; for she is impetuous, in spite of her appearing calm."

"Do let her alone, Maddy—you're no more help to a man at a time like this than a baby!" exclaimed Clifford, driven to desperation.

"You had better get help from Christine, then—she is so much wiser than I am," said Maddy, freely, "and you think so much more of her. You worry over her and her troubles till you almost forget that I need some attention."

"I can love two people, Maddy," said Clifford, a little startled by her evident observation of his recent abstracted moods.

"It seems not—but it doesn't matter," with an injured martyr air. "Is isn't my fault that she doesn't understand Albert—but of course, poor darling, I shall say nothing to her."

"Understand him!" exclaimed Clifford. "I told you it was not her doing, Maddy. Why will you persist in that wrong-headed way! You might help me if you chose, if it were but a word of sympathy! It seems as if it were for my sin my darling is suffering!"

"Sin!" repeated Maddy, growing pale.

"Cannot you see—understand! It was for you—but I did wrong him!"

"And yet you told me I did no wrong," said Maddy, looking at him steadily. "It was I, then, who thought of Albert—you, who said it was best as it was! But how you positively regret it!"

Clifford, who had flung himself into a chair, sprang up,—

"No, Maddy! I did not mean that—I never said it. Regret it! no, a thousand times. We are both foolish to quarrel when we need all the aid one can give the other. Be my own sweet Maddy again; and be very kind to Christine, for my sake. Sometimes I fancy you two have not been all I could wish."

Maddy flashed up and played with the chain at her belt. She made no movement towards her husband—he had rather undone himself by that appeal for his sister; but he came to her side, and pleaded, and praised, and coaxed till Maddy thought it time to allow her offended dignity to be appeased, and looked like another person when she whispered, so patiently, she was sorry, and glanced up under her lashes in the true coquetish style. It was a very pretty scene, this making up of a quarrel that might have been harmless had they been lovers.

Maddy's ready tears made her bright eyes look charming, but a little seed bedded itself in her heart that might bear evil fruit.

And Clifford felt that her proper vocation was to be petted and kissed, and that in the crises of his life he must stand alone—save for Christine.

It was not a pleasant thought, but it did not leave him.

The meeting between the two sisters went off very well.

It had cost Christine a great deal to come forward smilingly and kiss Maddie affectionately, as she had been used to do.

The night had been sleepless to her—a long, wretched waiting for the tardy dawn, and as it stole into her room and met her wide, tired, wakeful eyes, the thought of this meeting with Maddie grew too heavy to be borne.

There was so much in the wife's heart to be wrestled with and subdued, before she dared meet the woman who held all she coveted; and then, as she clasped her hand, her eyes searched the pretty face wistfully.

What power had she, where was it enshrined, to hold such undying love! How was it she could not see it or feel it!

Maddie behaved well. If Christine felt an over-kindness in her greeting—a something which repelled and chafed—Maddie was quite unconscious of it. She did her best to be herself. She made no allusion to the cause of Christine's presence there, and talked on indifferent subjects at the breakfast-table. She talked a little overpoweringly, but with the amiable intention of performing that disagreeable operation called "cheering up."

Christine found it devolved on her to keep up the ball with Maddie—Clifford was silent and gloomy.

The day passed heavily. Christine denied herself to all visitors, and to avoid them sat in Pelham's study.

Here Maddie fluttered from time to time, very kind and hospitable, bent on making her young sister at home, when all the poor child wanted was to be let alone.

She had never meant to stay here—she had seen enough in her constant visits to be aware that Maddie was jealous of her—and now doubly jealous.

At no time would a prolonged residence be advisable—under present circumstances it was impossible.

She bore it bravely for a few days—then she announced her intention of going out for the morning.

"You have come away in such a hurry," said Maddie, "of course you must want some things!"

"I am not going shopping," said the girl, wincing at the tone. "I am going to look for apartments."

"What!" exclaimed Pelham, and Maddie protested, secretly pleased. "Nonsense!" he went on, "I won't have it, Christine."

She only gave him a look which silenced him, and asked Maddie to come with her.

She had a double motive here. She wanted the weight of Maddie's presence—for Mrs. Clifford looked the young matron fully, and Christine was conscious she had not herself the least appearance of married staidness; and then she knew Maddie's soul delighted in house-hunting, and she was pleased to be able to show she had no ill-feeling.

They came back to luncheon, and Pelham heard with displeasure that Christine had taken some pretty and quiet rooms a few streets off, to which she proposed moving on the morrow.

Pelham made no comment, but catching his sister alone, later, he opened abruptly,—

"Christine, I don't like this, and I'm very angry with Maddie for encouraging it."

"No, you mustn't be angry, Pel, dear—not with her, it is my fault, not hers."

"Yours!" said Pelham, but his vexation melted as he looked at the pleading face. He took it between his hands and kissed it. "I understand your side of it," he said, "but it seems hard. I would give anything to keep you. Are you afraid of Albert coming here?"

"Partly—not that I think he would," said Christine.

"You'll not let him know where you are?"

"No—not now, at any rate."

The next evening saw Christine and Fanny installed in the new home.

It had been a painful but necessary duty to tell

some of the truth to the faithful maid, who listened to her mistress with the well-bred servant's passivity, and only showed what she felt by a more than ever careful attention.

She had seen that the life at Danewood was not what it should be, and thought much more of her mistress than of her master.

Christine felt intensely relieved away from Maddie's presence; but how lonely it was!

It grew on her like something visible, coming upon her step by step. A terrible depression laid hold of her. She had full leisure for thought—to look back to the might have been, to look forward and see no light; to wonder what Albert had felt and what he would do; to hope she would never see him again, and yet to feel a longing that made her heart ache; to recall every word and look of the last day at home, to feel her burning indignation deepen with the recollection, and the love that had been part of her being grow cold and dead.

If only Colin were here, she thought, she could bear the solitude. She loved him dearly, and he must be unhappy without her.

She felt the hot tears in her eyes—poor, lonely, unhappy child, whose heart and soul were wrong almost beyond her strength.

If Albert Delmar had seen her that night, crouching on the floor, with her head pillowed on a low chair, the young face quiet at last in the half-dreamy sleep of exhaustion, would he not have seen what work he had done, and despair that he could ever undo it!

(To be continued.)

MY COUSIN AND I.

—307—

I OPENED an old box of treasures to-day, the odds and ends of a life-time, and, carefully folded in silver paper, I found a photograph that called the tears into my eyes—the photograph of Robert Sartoris, my first lover!

How I worshipped that bright, frank face years ago, when the brown hair curled over the broad, white forehead, and the big brown eyes, love-lighted, looked into my own.

It had been such a noble love in my eyes, for Robert's father was owner of the great factory where I was only one of hundreds of "hands" whose toil piled up wealth for him, and a hard-earned living for ourselves.

There was violent opposition made when my lover announced in his home that he was engaged to one of the "girls" in the factory.

His father threatened to disinherit him, his mother sobbed and entreated, his sister turned up her nose, and hoped "he did not intend to introduce his vulgar wife into the family."

When all this was told to me I refused to continue our engagement, and Robert moped and grew so pale and miserable, that his mother, who idolised him, consented to climb up four flights of stairs and call upon me in my sky parlour.

What a splendid woman she was! Dignified, yet so tender and gentle. My heart went out to her as soon as she looked at me from eyes as big and brown as my darling's own.

Before I quite realised how freely I was talking, she had won from me the story of my life, which was a very simple one.

I had had a home and friends, but had lost them all, and had come down to my present position through sheer necessity.

Before she left me Mrs. Sartoris kissed me kindly, and spoke words that nestled into my heart, and rested there for many long years.

After that Robert came again, and our engagement was recognised.

I should have loved him had he been the poorest "hand" in the factory, yet I cannot deny that when I came to my poor room, evening after evening, weary with my heavy toll, to which I was not accustomed, I did think hopefully of that future that seemed so near, when I could preside over a pleasant home, need worry no more over "ways and means," and take happiness as my right.

I was spending all my leisure time and every spare shilling upon my simple wedding garments, when I received a letter from my cousin Marion, the only child of my father's brother.

Twice, three times I read it, and then sat staring at it in stupid amazement, trying to take in the calamity it told.

"Brookfield, June 20th, 18—.

"DEAR BESSIE,—

"Do you think if I come to A—that you can help me to find some work to do? Father is dead, and there is nothing for me. I was so ill for a week that I could not tell anybody what to do, and that is the reason no one sent for you. I am going to Mrs. Evans to-night, and then I shall come to you, hoping you can help me.

"MARION."

Marion! Homeless, orphaned, seeking work! And my uncle, who had sent me so many generous gifts, dead and ruined, and little Marion looking for work. I can say, truthfully, that no trouble of my own—and I had seen many heavy ones—ever seemed to me so crushing, so terrible as this that had fallen upon my cousin.

She gave me no address, but was coming to me. Never had my poor room looked so bare and homely as when I thought of the bright, beautiful cousin I had never seen in them, coming to live there.

The spur of hospitality roused me from my weeping reverie. At least I would make the place as pleasant as I could. I scrubbed and polished, washed everything that would wash, took an entire day from the factory without asking permission, and spent some of my carefully hoarded savings in eggs and milk to make a loaf of cake.

Late in the afternoon Marion came, with two huge trunks, which we were compelled to leave on the landing, outside the room doors.

Woe-begone, pale, and dressed in the deepest mourning, my poor little cousin was like a butterfly crushed by a heavy rain. She was such a child still, so utterly ignorant of all care and anxiety, so small and dainty, that my three years of seniority, my tall, strong frame, my knowledge of trouble, made me feel like an elderly woman, a motherly companion filling my heart.

For several days Marion talked only of her father, her sorrow, and all she had lost. Mr. Sartoris gave me a fortnight's leave of absence from the factory to make my cousin feel at home, and I took her out every day, and tried in all ways to comfort her. She was grateful, loving, caressing, but miserable.

The weather was oppressively warm, and she had never been in the town in the summer.

She never complained. It was marvellous to see how she kept from murmuring, although her pale face, drooping figure, and mournful eyes were more eloquent than words. The simple meals—the best I could give her—were scarcely tasted, and I really feared, sometimes, that Marion would die.

Robert suggested that he should take her for a drive or walk every day, when the time came for me to return to my duties at the factory, and I eagerly accepted the offer.

He had taken a great interest in her from the first evening when he saw her. It was a very warm day, and Marion had taken off her heavy black dress, and put on a light one, that suited her fair, blonde beauty and little girlish figure.

Robert's eyes rested often upon her as she sat in a large chairs-covered chair that had been my father's, and in which her figure was almost lost.

She must have presented a strong contrast to my tall form, my dark hair and eyes, and my cheap cotton dress made by my own fingers in simplest style.

After a few days, when they became better acquainted, Marion and Robert talked of many things quite strange to me.

They compared their tastes in music, literature, painting, while I sat by, busily stitching

upon my modest "trousseau," well pleased to see something of the old brightness in my cousin's face, and grateful to Robert for each word that pleased her.

I could not make up my mind to ask for a place in the factory for Marion for I was sure she would break down; but Mrs. Sartoris gave me some embroidery for her to do, and she was as pleased as a child at the idea of actually earning some money.

Poor little Marion! How the work dragged in those wee hands. How often the soft, fair curls were pushed back from the hot forehead. How widely the rosebud mouth opened to yawn. It was worse when I was away all day.

Many times I found her dinner exactly as I had left it; many times I found Marion curled up in my father's big chair asleep, with eyes red and swollen by weeping.

Robert took her out quite often. Sybil, his sister, who had entirely conquered her aversion to me, came and carried her away for a walk. Mrs. Sartoris was very kind to her. The great trunks were unpacked to show Sybil the pretty dresses and trinkets.

When did I first begin to feel lonely and neglected, to realise that in the family where it was my right to be like a daughter I was second in importance to my cousin!

When did my sore heart first feel that Robert's kiss upon my lips was cold, and his caresses no longer held me as if I was life's dearest treasure? Slowly, little by little, I learned my lesson.

The long, hot summer passed away, and I no longer sewed upon my wedding clothes for a marriage in October, knowing I would not need them—that honour alone kept Robert faithful to me.

One day when Marion, Sybil, and Robert had gone together for a drive, I left the factory early and went to see Mrs. Sartoris. She had been true to me, and I was sure she loved me; so it was to her I opened my heart.

"I am not jealous in any mean sense of the word," I told her, "but Robert's love is no longer mine, and I want you to tell him he is free."

"Free!" she said; and I started to hear her sweet, low voice so bitter—"free to wound and reject one of the purest, sweetest hearts in the world, and take a shallow, selfish girl for his wife! Do not defend her," she said, as I would have spoken. "I have watched her carefully. In her light way she is fond of you, but Robert can take her back into the life she has lost, and she has exerted every art to win him. The only comfort I can give you is, that though he is my son, and it pains me to say so, Robert has proved unworthy of you. A love so easily turned aside would never have filled your life as you deserve. Some day you will be glad you lost it."

How kind she was to me! In the bitter days that followed, when it was Marion's wedding that was talked of, when the treasures of clothing in the big trunks were renovated, "made over," "done up," repacked; when a combination of white silk and lace was decided upon for a wedding dress, and a fur-trimmed cloth cloak was brushed up to travel in; when the actual wedding was an accomplished fact, and the great trunks and Marion left my rooms for ever, Mrs. Sartoris stood by me, my friend in sympathy and affection, such as my own mother could scarcely have surpassed.

Looking at the photograph with eyes no longer blinded with love, I can see how weak the mouth is, how little strength or true manliness there is in the bright, handsome face; and I can see the reason why, when old Mr. Sartoris died, the wealth he had gained melted away under mismanagement; how much of the mother's jointure followed, trying to avert the inevitable ruin; how intemperance gained a hold upon the weak brain.

Sybil married a rich man, and Mrs. Sartoris has a home with her, but Robert and Marion, with their sickly, neglected children, live in rooms scarcely better than mine in my factory days, almost supported by the charity of Sybil's husband.

And from the photograph I look up to a portrait over my mantel-piece, seeing a strong, good

face, not handsome, but full of manly purpose, the face of a man honoured and respected by all who know him, who gives me the full treasure of love in his large, warm heart, and to whom I give such love as I did not even understand in those days when Mrs. Sartoris said to me: "Some day you will be glad you lost Robert's love."

We are not very rich, but my boys and girls have a pleasant home, my husband is prospering, and I am a grateful, happy woman, and can look back with intense thankfulness to the loss of my first lover.

[THE END]

TURQUOISES are growing more and more into favour—quite a small stone of good colour costing about £7. They are tiresome stones to wear, on account of their so often losing their colour and turning green. Turquoise rings must always be removed before washing the hands, as water completely ruins them; and any grease touching them is even more disastrous, as people with moist skins seldom manage to keep the colour of the stone. Emeralds are increasing in value every day, and rubies for the moment decreasing; but really fine stones will always command a good price, and will never cease to be worn.

So numerous are the queer beliefs concerning the number seven that a narration of them all would fill a volume, but we may mention a few of them. From the very earliest ages the seven great planets were known and ruled this world and the dwellers in it, and their number entered into every conceivable matter that concerned man. There were seven days in the week, "seven holes in the head for the master stars are seven," seven ages both for man and the world in which he lives. There were seven material heavens, and in the under world described by Dante the great pagan dead who were not good enough for heaven or bad enough for hell reposed in a seven-walled and seven-gated city. There are seven colours in the spectrum and seven notes in the diatonic octave, and the "leading note of the scale is the seventh. Be it noted that the seventh son is not always gifted with beneficent powers. In Portugal he is believed to be subject to the powers of darkness and to be compelled every Saturday evening to assume the likeness of an ass.

THE BETEL.—Like the cola nut in Africa and the kavakava root among the Islanders of the Pacific, the betel furnishes within its realm the basis for many ceremonial usages. The betel, wherever used, is the sign of friendship, peace, courtesy, and hospitality. At a mere meeting in the street, or at the formal reception of ambassadors, on entering a hut or a palace, the betel is offered and gladly accepted. The failure to extend or to accept this courtesy is regarded as a great neglect or an insult. Under these conditions friendly relations cannot exist. Marriages could hardly take place without this friendship-founding and friendship-sustaining article. In Siam the word for home is kan-mak, meaning a dish containing betel. A betel-roll prepared with spices and sent by a woman to a man is regarded in parts of India as a declaration of love. In parts of New Guinea the daughters of the chiefs, after they reach twelve or thirteen years of age, remain at home for two or three years, and then their return to society is celebrated with much pomp. In the dance which takes place the debutantes pass in and out among the dancers, and make known their selection of a lover by handing him a betel-nut. In many places it is regarded as improper for a person of lower rank, in speaking with a superior, to cease chewing his betel-roll. This, probably, is due to the fact that the betel sweetens the breath when chewed, and to cease from chewing it might expose the person of higher degree to annoyance from the other's evil breath. On the Brahmaputra River the natives measure distance by the number of betel-rolls consumed during the journey. It is of course a time unit rather than one of distance. A similar custom is that of the cocoa chewers of Peru.

£100 IN PRIZES.
1st, £50; 2nd, £30; 3rd, £20.

CASH PRIZES, as above, will be given away as an advertisement for PRAIRIE POWDERS, the unequalled, pleasant and harmless remedy for Headache, Neuralgia, Nervousness, Rheumatism, and Tics, among competitors who succeed in turning into the names of five common ailments the following letters—

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Post your solution, together with a Stamped Addressed Envelope for result, to
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EPPS'S COCOAINE
COCOA-NIB EXTRACT.
(Tea-like.)

The choicest roasted nibs (broken-up beans) of the natural Cocoa on being subjected to powerful hydraulic pressure, give forth their excess of oil, leaving for use a finely-flavoured powder—"Cocaine," a product which, when prepared with boiling water, has the consistency of tea, of which it is now, with many, beneficially taking the place. Its active principle being a gentle nerve stimulant, supplies the needed energy without unduly exciting the system. Sold only in labelled tins. If unable to obtain it of your tradesman, a tin will be sent post free for 9 stamps.

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Homoeopathic Chemists, London.

TOOTH-ACHE
CURED INSTANTLY BY
BUNTER'S NERVE
Prevents Decay, Stops Extractions, Sleepless Nights, Nervous Headaches and all Nerve Pains. Sold by all Chemists.

DON'T LET MOTHS RUIN YOUR FURS OR BLANKETS

KEATING'S POWDER PRESERVES THEM.

KILLS BLACKBEETLES & FLEAS

Tins 3d., 6d. & 1/-

TOWLE'S PENNYROYAL PILLS
FOR FEMALES.

QUICKLY CORRECT ALL IRREGULARITIES, REMOVE ALL OBSTRUCTIONS, and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex. Boxes, 1/1 & 2/6 (contains three times the quantity), of all Chemists. Sent anywhere on receipt of 15 or 34 stamps, by E. T. TOWLE & Co., Manufacturers, Dryden St., Nottingham.

Beware of Quackery, impostors and swindlers.

EVERY WOMAN
SHOULD WRITE FOR THE
NEW MEDICAL WORK,
Health, the Sunshine of Life,
which will be sent POST FREE to any address on receipt of six stamps. The book contains full particulars of the treatment of various ailments you suffer from. It also contains a selection from the thousands of testimonials in favour of the ELECTRO-PATHIC BELT. ADVICE FREE OF CHARGE (personally or by letter.) Write to Lady's Dept.,
THE MEDICAL BATTERY CO., LTD.,
489, OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.

FACETIE.

A GIRL'S tongue is the arrow; there's a quiver in her voice, and she soon finds a beau.

HE: "Woman, when you married me you got a wonder." SHE: "Yes, and I have been wondering ever since."

OLD FRIEND: "Hello! So you are in trade, now, eh? Why did you retire from literature?" DE WRITER: "Got hungry."

TOWNE: "I came near being very badly hurt last week." MR. BROWNE: "In what way?" TOWNE: "I almost bought a bicycle."

TEACHER: "Now, boys, can any of you tell me what is a lake?" PATSY: "Sure it's a hole in the kiltie."

DRAMATIC CRITIC: "That sailors' chorus was awful. What was the matter?" STAGE MANAGER: "The tars couldn't get the right pitch."

DOLLIE: "I wonder why Love is always represented with wings?" MOLIE: "They are for him to use in flying out of the window when poverty comes in at the door."

MRS. BACON: "Your husband uses terrible language to that parrot!" MRS. CRIMSONBEAK: "That's nothing; you ought to hear him addressing his alarm clock!"

"NUTTY, I suppose you won't write to me at all now you are married!" "Yes, I will, Nan. Jack's awfully sweet, of course; but I can't talk to him about my new clothes."

SPACE REPORTER: "Can't you give me something to write up to-day?" CITY EDITOR: "Haven't a thing." SPACE REPORTER: "Well, then, give me something to write down."

THE GRAND VISITOR was ambitious. "I think," says he, "that my head will be on a medal some day." "Ha!" said the Caliph. "Good idea. I'll have it struck off at once!"

FIRST LADY (to friend, who had just ridden across a field of young grass to ask directions of the farmer owner): "Did he tell you where to go?" SECOND LADY: "Yes, he did. And if you go over he'll tell you too!"

FOREMAN: "Where shall I put this report of the prize fight?" EDITOR: "Put it alongside of Rev. Dr. Goodman's sermon. Then people can read the prize fight while pretending to read the sermon."

"MISS DUBBLEST told me that my new costume was a dream," said the young woman. "She said about the same thing to me," replied her confidante. "How nice of her." "She said it was a nightmare."

SEVERE EXAMINER (to small boy): "Who helped you with this map, boy?" BOY: "Nobody, sir." "Come, now, tell me the truth. Didn't your brother help you?" "No, sir. He did it all."

MAMMA (to George, a little boy, who is escorting his sister to a New Year's party): "Now mind you keep an eye on Mianle." GEORGE: "Oh—or—well—you know, mother, it doesn't do for a fellow to be always watching his sister. Other chaps don't like it, you know!"

FIRST SOCIALIST (to pal, who has somehow come in for a bottle of gin): "Alves, matey!" SECOND DO: "Not me! Wot d'yer like me for?" "Well, you're a purty Socialist! Don't we preach 'share and share alike'?" "Certainly; but while I'm drinkin' this 'ere gin I'm a bloomin' harlotocrat!"

FULLER: "Dr. Nomad told Tibby that drugs would not help his complaint, and recommended outdoor exercise on a wheel as being the best thing for him." BUTLER: "The Doc is simple to throw business away like that." FULLER: "Oh, I don't know; he charges double rates for surgical visits."

MRS. JELIUS (interviewing parlourmaid): "I am afraid you won't do. You see, you are—very good-looking, and my husband, being an artist, is a great admirer of female beauty, and—" PARLOURMAID (interposing): "Yes, ma'am, anyone can see that by his marrying you!" MRS. JELIUS: "Er—well, anyway, I will give you a month's trial!"

"Now," said the lawyer, "I cannot take your case unless you tell me the whole truth." "What shall I tell first?" asked the client, peering through the bars. "Well, you might let me know fully how much money you've got."

JONES, who is, to say the least, a little absent-minded, was on his way to his own wedding, when something impeded the progress of the carriage. It stood at a standstill so long that Jones put his head out of the window and said to the driver: "Hurry up, old man, hurry up; or the whole thing will be over before we get there."

MRS. JAGGS (the next morning): "Do you know what time you got home last night?" MR. JAGGS: "It must have been pretty late, but an important business transaction detained me at the office, and—by the way, dear, did you see anything of my shoes?" "Yes; you'll find them hanging on the hat-rack in the hall, just where you left them."

"I AM not expecting any package," said the lady of the house. "This is the number," persisted the driver of the delivery-waggon, looking at his book again. "Name's Higgins, ain't it?" "Yes." "No. 374?" "That's our number." "Then it's for you." "I think not. It must be a case of mistaken identity." "No, mum. It's a case of boot."

THE other day the police made a raid on a betting club, and after taking the names of the men they found there, told them to appear at the court the next morning, which they did. To one of the delinquents the magistrate said: "What are you by trade?" "A locksmith, sir." "Well, what were you doing when the police made the raid?" "Well, sir, I was just making a bolt for the door."

MR. PETER, a rather diffident man, was unable to prevent himself from being introduced, one evening, to a fascinating young lady, who, misunderstanding his name, constantly addressed him as Mr. Peters, much to the gentleman's distress. Finally, summoning courage, he bashfully, but earnestly remonstrated: "Oh, don't call me Peters—call me Pats!" "Ah, but I don't know you well enough, Mr. Peters," said the young lady, blushing, as she playfully withdrew behind her fan.

YOUNG FATHER: "I am amazed, shocked, my dear, to hear you say you intend to give the baby some paregoric. Don't you know paregoric is opium, and opium stunts the growth, enfeebles the constitution, weakens the brain, destroys the nerves and produces rickets, marasmus, consumption, insanity and death!" YOUNG MOTHER: "Horror! I never heard a word about that. I won't give the little ducky darling a drop, no, indeed. But something must be done to stop his yelling. You carry him awhile." FATHER (after an hour's steady stamping with the squalling infant): "Where in thunder is that paregoric?"

"Why didn't you get up and give her your seat or permit me to give her mine?" said a woman to her husband. They had just got off a car. The woman's face expressed great anxiety of mind. "Why should we give her a seat?" the husband asked; "just because she was so richly dressed, I suppose," he added. "Is it possible that you did not know her?" the wife exclaimed. "Of course; I am not supposed to know every well-dressed woman who comes along." "Oh, James, she is our cook, and I am afraid she will treasure up against us our lack of courtesy." "Why didn't you tell me!" the husband exclaimed. The woman did not reply, but, tremblingly, leaned heavily upon his arm.

£20 TORACCONISTS COMMENCING.
See 1118, Guide (1899 page), M. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £1000. TORACCONISTS' OFFICE: 1118, Guide, 1118, Guide, 1118, Guide. The largest and original house (40 years' reputation). Manager, H. MYERS.

KEARSLEY'S 100 YEARS REPUTATION
WIDOW WELCH'S
FEMALE PILLS

Awarded Certificates of Merit for the cure of irregularities, Anemia, and all Female Complaints. They have the approval of the Medical Profession. Beware of Imitations. The only genuine are in *White Paper Wrappers*. Borne, in 1844, and in M. of all Chemists. In 54 boxes contain three times the pills. Read carefully on receipt of 1d or 2d stamps, by the numbers 6 and 6. K.E.A. K.E.A. 17, Wood Street, Westminster. Sold in the Colonies.

"MATCHLESS"

"WARNING TO LADIES."
Beware of Polishes that set up injurious acids. They impregnate your clothes with veridigis. "SIMPLE TEST."
Put a small quantity in a penny and leave it overnight. If it sets up acid the surface will become green with veridigis.
"MATCHLESS" METAL POLISH
will not turn any metal green being free from acid.

METAL POLISH
PATON, CALVERT & CO. MANUFACTURERS, LIVERPOOL.

A BOOK FOR LADIES.

The knowledge contained in this book is of PRICELESS VALUE TO EVERY MARRIED LADY, and has been the means of brightening the lives of thousands. It contains a large amount of valuable information. All will profit by reading it, as the knowledge gained is priceless and cannot but do good. Sent in sealed envelope for two stamps.
A lady writes us: "I have read your book. It is simply invaluable, and gave me the information I have sought after for years."

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DOMESTIC SERVANTS WANTED IN CANADA.

For villages, towns, cities, and in the country districts. Advice may be obtained in the United Kingdom from Government Agents and in Canada from Government Agents. Ladies' Committees are also formed in many places in Canada. Apply for pamphlets and all information, supplied gratis and post free, to the High Commissioner for Canada, 17, Victoria Street, London, S.W.



"No shape but this can please your dainty eye."—Shakespeare.
EXQUISITE MODELS.
PERFECT FIT.
GUARANTEED WEAR.

THE Y & N
DIAGONAL SEAM
CORSETS.

Will not split in the seams nor tear on the fabric.

Made in White, Black, and all the fashionable Colours and Shades in Italian Cloth, Satin, and Coutil.

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THREE GOLD MEDALS.

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4/- SEWING MACHINE 4/-

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"As supplied to Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Alexandra of Russia." THIS Machine does work which will bear comparison with that of other machines costing higher prices. Entirely made of metal with steel and plated fittings. It works at great speed. It has no complicated parts, no machines, therefore does not require to be learnt. No winding of bobbins. No trouble. No teaching. No experience; and is everywhere superseding the old-fashioned troublesome machines. It works fine or coarse materials equally as well. Sent Carriage Paid for 4s. 6d.; two for 8s. 6d. Extra Needles, 6d. and 1s. per packet. Write for Free Opinions and Testimonials, or call and see the Machines at work. Address—

SEWING MACHINE CO.

34 DEPT., 31, BROOKE STREET, HOLBORN, LONDON, E.C.

SOCIETY.

EVERY year the King of Italy receives a New Year's gift of 5,000 cigars from the Emperor of Austria.

It is expected that Prince Arthur of Connaught will leave Bonn at the end of the summer half, as having become heir to the throne of Saxo-Coburg-Gotha, he must complete his education in Germany, and in about two years he will have to enter the army, following in the same routine as that pursued by his cousin, the late Prince Alfred.

SHORTLY before her tragic death, the Empress of Austria gave sittings to the Vienna painter, Barthold Lippay, who is now working hard at the life-sized picture, which will shortly be completed. The portrait is considered an excellent likeness, and represents the unfortunate lady with the bright and happy expression which of recent years was so seldom seen on her handsome face; never, in fact, was the old look of unrestrained brightness seen after the tragic death of her son.

REGIONS are aloft again concerning the possible betrothal of Princess Victoria of Wales to her cousin, Prince George of Crete. As, however, the religious question is the difficulty that stands in the way of the union of Prince George and his cousin, it is not very easy to see how matters are to be smoothed over.

THE Duchess of Saxo-Coburg and Gotha continues to be much depressed and far from well. Her Royal and Imperial Highness and Princess Beatrice will probably come to England in May and spend some time at Balmoral quietly with the Queen. The Duchess is very fond of the Deedle, and spent several autumns at Birkhall, which used to be lent to her Royal Highness by the Queen when the Duchess lived in England.

THE Empress of Germany is an expert photographer, and while travelling in the Holy Land devoted much time to photography. Each place of interest visited throughout the tour afforded scope for the Royal Kodak, and the result is a collection of very interesting pictures. A number of the finest have been published in the form of an album, and by permission of the Empress, are to be sold, and the proceeds devoted to charitable purposes.

THE Queen will probably return to Windsor Castle from the Continent on Friday the 28th, or Saturday the 29th. Her Majesty will spend the greater part of the second week in May at Buckingham Palace, and there is to be a Drawing Room during her stay in town (on Wednesday the 10th), at which her Majesty will receive the Corps Diplomatique. The Queen will go to Balmoral a day or two before Whitstide (probably on Friday, May 19th), and her Majesty is to stay in Scotland until after Ascot race-week, returning to Windsor on Tuesday, June 20th.

THE Emperor William intends to spend the third week of May at Wiesbaden, where the Royal Schloss is to be prepared for his reception. The Emperor will then meet the King of Denmark, who is going to take the waters at Wiesbaden during May. There are to be festival performances of several operas at the Royal Theatre during the Emperor's visit, for which great preparations will be made. Several of the German Sovereign Princes are expected at Wiesbaden to meet the Emperor, and considerable importance is attached to his Majesty's interviews with King Christian, as it is thought that they will result in an arrangement as to the Brunswick succession, a matter which is now pressing for settlement, as it is well known that Prince Albert of Prussia is most anxious to resign the Regency, and there is no object in appointing a successor to him if Prince George of Hanover is to be allowed to ascend the throne. The Brunswick succession carries with it the large settled estates of the late Duke of Brunswick, and a great collection of plate and pictures, besides the Schloss in Brunswick and a fine country seat with large forests which are full of game.

STATISTICS.

ONLY one man in 208 is over 6ft. in height. ONE THIRD of the people who go mad are said to recover their senses.

THERE are said to be 230 glaciers in the Alps over five miles in length.

It has been estimated that steamers are 20 per cent. safer than sailing vessels.

It has been ascertained that one of the mountains in the moon is 36,000ft. high, while several are upwards of 80,000ft.

A hundred pounds' worth of sovereigns lose £3 9s. 4d. of their value in a hundred years; £100 worth of half-crowns lose £13 11s. 8d., and £100 worth of sixpences lose £50 18s. 8d. in value, or more than one-half, in the hundred years.

GEMS.

If there is good in us, it will bring out good in others.

PLEASURE is like a cordial; a little of it is not injurious, but too much destroys.

A HIGH ideal is a standing invitation to reach a more exalted position.

HE who always complains of the clouds receives little of life's sunshine and deserves less.

TRUE independence never merges into isolation but gladly welcomes every aid from every source, not in servile and indolent abjection, but as the growing plant welcomes the warm sun and the refreshing rain by which it is to gain in strength, in beauty, and in fruitfulness.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PIGS IN BLANKETS.—Take as many large or medium-sized oysters as desired; wash and dry them thoroughly; put each oyster in a thin slice of breakfast bacon, with a wooden toothpick. Broil them until the bacon is crisp and brown; do not remove toothpicks; serve hot on toast; garnished with watercress and poached eggs.

LITTLE EGG BALLS.—Take the yolks of three eggs that have been boiled twenty minutes, mash fine and the raw yolk of one egg. Season with salt and a little red pepper. Roll into balls the size of marbles with as little flour as possible, and either drop into a kettle of boiling water or fry carefully in butter and drop into soup.

EGG AND HAM ROLLS.—The ingredients required are:—One and a-half pounds of cooked potatoes, half-pound of ham (cooked), two hard-boiled eggs, half a teaspoonful of pepper, one ditto salt, one ditto A 1 or other sauce, one ditto chopped parsley, one egg to bind the whole with. Chop the ham and eggs very small, pass the potatoes through a sieve, add the ham and eggs, then the pepper, salt, parsley, and sauce, and mix all well together. Divide into about seven or eight squares, brush over with egg and bread crumbs, and fry in boiling fat till of a golden-brown colour, and serve hot on a dish garnished with parsley.

PISTACHIO SAUCE.—Two ounces of pistachio nuts, half an ounce of cornflour, three-quarters of a gill of cold water, one ounce of caster sugar, one tablespoonful of cream, a wineglassful of marsala, a few drops of vanilla. Throw the pistachio nuts into boiling water and let them reboil for a minute, then shell them. Next pound them in a mortar till smooth. Mix the cornflour smoothly with the water, then put into a saucepan with the pounded nuts and let both boil. Stir well. Add the ounce of caster sugar, the cream, wine and vanilla. Then strain. It liked, milk may be used instead of cream and the wine may be omitted; but put instead a little lemon-juice and a little more water.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ALUMINIUM telegraph wire is to be erected in the Philippines.

ICEBERGS in the Atlantic sometimes last for 200 years.

AUSTRALIA is capable of supporting at least 10,000,000 inhabitants.

In most of the smaller Russian hotels visitors are obliged to find their own bedclothes.

THE inhabitants of Eap Island, in the Pacific, have pink hair.

It is not generally known that no century can begin on a Sunday or a Wednesday or a Friday.

A MACHINE has been completed that will count and bind in packages 500,000 postcards in ten hours.

THE most wonderful vegetable in the world is the truff: it has neither roots, stems, leaves, flowers, nor seeds.

It is considered that the Japanese men are among the best needleworkers in the world, their only equals being the women in Russia.

PITTSBURG has been called the city of bridges. Fourteen bridges span the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers within the city limits.

LAMBETH PALACE can show specimens of almost every style of architecture which has prevailed since 1190.

WHALES from 300 to 400 years old are sometimes met with. The age is ascertained by the size and number of layers of the whalebone, which increases yearly.

RARELY indeed is a wealthy Turk seen at his wife's dinner-table. He usually dines in a part of the house remote from occupied by his consubstantial partner.

It would be difficult to imagine more extraordinary digestive powers than those of the hyena. One of these beasts has been known to swallow six large bones whole without crushing them.

MUSHROOM juice is a sure-cure against snake poison, according to an eminent scientist. He has found that all mushrooms possess a substance which acts as an anti-toxin against serpents.

It is a curious fact that there are totemism in the animal kingdom. Bipedes and quadrupeds alike are fond of alcoholic drinks, and although some display aversion when first tasting liquor, they soon acquire a craving for it.

"CATTY" is a weight still in use in the treaty ports of China. When the Chinese first sold tea to Europeans they enclosed it in the little lacquer cases, which each weighed a "catty" and in due time were called tea-catties, and at last tea-caddies.

THE sea cucumber, one of the curious jelly bodies that inhabit the ocean, can practically efface itself when in danger by squeezing the water out of its body and forcing itself into a crack so narrow as not to be visible to the naked eye.

At the National Zoological Gardens in Washington has just been received a tarsier from the Philippines. The tarsier may best be described as having a face like an owl, and a body, limbs, and tail like those of a monkey. His sitting height is about that of the squirrel.

EMIGRATION TO ALGOMA.—The district of Algoma lies in the western part of Canada, to the North and North-east of Lake Superior. A good deal of mineral development is taking place owing to the discoveries of gold, copper and nickel and other minerals. There are also excellent farming locations for those who prefer a wooded country, and have a little capital to invest in general farming or in sheep-raising. A good market is found for most of the supplies that are raised, in the local mining and lumber camps. Anyone desiring information relating to this part of Canada, may obtain it on application to Mr. F. Rogers, D.O.L., Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, or to the Canadian Government Offices in the United Kingdom.

IT IS

GOOD to have a pure soap that will not destroy the texture of fine fabric.
BETTER to have a soap that will not harm the tenderest skin; but it is by far the
BEST to have a soap that is not merely harmless, but directly beneficial.



IS

GOOD because it will not destroy the texture or colour of any fabric.
BETTER because it will not harm the delicate tissue of any skin.
BEST of all, because it is directly beneficial.

SWAN White Floating SOAP is made of oils and fats pure and sweet enough for eating.

SWAN White Floating SOAP will not injure the daintiest or most delicate fabric.

SWAN White Floating SOAP makes damask, and other fine linen, white as the whitest snow.

SWAN White Floating SOAP gives a health-glow to the skin, inducing that "soothing sensation" at once so delightful and so comfortable.

A Purer Soap is beyond the Art of Soapmaking.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CONCORDS.—We think he can be required to pay.
PABBY.—It depends on the rules of the society.

M. H.—Make a proposal to some high-class insurance office.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.—The parish register should be searched.

MADDER.—The mistress appears to be within her strict legal rights.

UNLucky.—The tenant is responsible for the repair of broken windows.

ROSEB.—Whit Sunday fell in 1890 on May 25th, and in 1891 on May 17th.

DAISY.—Can be sued for within six years from date of payment on account.

POOR MARY ANN.—Submit the will and all other documents to a solicitor.

W. M.—If she entered the workhouse you would have to contribute to her maintenance.

CONVARIANT CONTRIBUTOR.—We do not think that we can properly give any advice in the case.

SUPERSTITION.—The law deals with fortune-telling as imposture, and punishes all who practise it.

SISTER-IN-LAW.—The husband is not responsible for debts contracted by his wife before marriage.

ANXIOUS.—You will need personal instruction; a whole page of written directions would be of little use.

MOONBY.—A little olive oil is the best thing to apply. Paint the hinges over, using a soft brush for the purpose.

E. D. A.—Half a teaspoonful of oil of vitrol in a tablespoonful of water applied with a feather will remove it.

LE BITTER TACULUM.—Write commander, your son can be put under stoppages in order to provide aliment as hitherto.

M. D.—You would not be able to estimate their value from any book. Obtain the opinion of some high-class dealer in London.

BOB'S LADY LOVE.—Very strict examinations have to be passed before the individual is allowed to practise on his own account.

LOUNGE.—The Eolian harp was the invention, it is believed, of Athanasius Kircher, who lived in the seventeenth century.

AFFLICTED READER.—The two periods being concurrent means that they run together, so that when one is finished the other is also.

MURV.—Paraffin, bath brick, and whiting mixed to a paste is excellent for the purpose. Polish with dry whiting and soft dusters.

I WILL NOT GIVE MY HEART AWAY.

I will not give my heart away!
 I am too proud, I don't deny it;
 And so, whatever you may say,
 I will not give it—you must buy it!
 It is not gold—it is not land—
 Nor name, nor fame, nor high degree;
 But if, indeed, you wish my hand,
 I'll tell you what the price shall be!

And first the House—I'd have it good;
 And furnished nobly of the best—
 Its inward worth well understood,
 Its soundness equal to the test!
 I'd have it warm in every part;
 In every trial, firm as well;
 If that House is to be your Heart,
 And in that Heart I am to dwell!

Oh, some with counterfeits will try,
 Before with Love's true gold they'll part;
 They think, but once deceive the eye,
 'Tis easy to deceive the heart!
 But with no counterfeits, though new,
 And bravely gilt, will I be caught;
 Though glittering brighter than the true,
 With no such coin will I be bought.

Give me the heart that's rich in worth,
 Although in worldly riches poor;
 The want of fortune upon earth
 Is not the worst want we endure!
 The want of feeling—temper—trust,
 The want of truth, when hearts are sought,
 Gold, linked to these, is worse than dust;
 With no such gold will I be bought.

No, 'tis not gold—it is not land—
 Nor name, nor fame, nor high degree;
 But if, indeed, you wish my hand,
 I've told you what the price shall be.

J. D.—Shop fittings are not in any sense fixtures; you are quite at liberty to remove your case, but when doing so must be careful to restore the landlord's property to the state in which you received it; fill up nail holes with putty or plaster of Paris, and leave all smooth; this is all he can insist upon.

BUTTERFLY.—Going into the vitiated atmosphere of a public-house would aggravate your state beyond remedy; far better to be employed out of doors always.

C. L.—It is possible to purify the air by placing charcoal about on the floor and shelves, but a more lasting remedy would be to have it properly drained.

SWEET SAVENTRE.—A silver wedding is a custom derived from Germany, and means the twenty-fifth anniversary of the marriage day of a husband and wife when both are living.

E. C.—The most active volcano in the world is Mount Sangay, 17,100 feet high, situated on the eastern chain of the Andes, South America. It has been in constant eruption since 1725.

BARE.—The father is not obliged to attend at the registrar's office, but the mother must do so; failing her, the person who is head of the house in which the birth took place.

MALE READER.—The Home Secretary for England, and the Secretary for Scotland each respite prisoners under sentence of death on his own prerogative, without going to the Queen at all.

TURVEY.—Czechs, Slavs, Croats, and Hungs, are names of the different nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, like the English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh in the United Kingdom.

AGATHA.—There is no hospital known to us where you can get free tuition in the duties of a nurse. We should suggest your applying to the matron of one of the large London hospitals, such as St. Thomas' at Westminster, when we have no doubt you would get the desired information.

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ALL LETTERS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON READER, 36, Catherine Street, Strand, W.C.

*. We cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

A BIT OF A SAVAGE.

'Oh, do let things alone! What good is it your worrying about them? All you can do to prevent or to cure the evils of this world won't amount to a row of pins. And what's the use of making yourself miserable over the misery of other people? Matters always were as they are now, and ever shall be, world without end, as far as you can tell. If people will dig holes and then tumble into them, why, let them stay there till they learn how to climb out. Folk will fall ill and they will die; and why fret over it? You have your own burden to carry and nobody offers to help you; don't bother your head about the burdens of others. That, I take it, is the only philosophy of life that is going to work. All the rest is nothing but shilly-shally sentiment.'

The man who talked this way to me the other night is a familiar acquaintance. He is not half a bad fellow, but he has an idea that he knows the world and has seen through the humbug of it. He says that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is a sheer waste of nerve substance to invest any feeling in what happens to your neighbours. Pick 'em up if they are right in your road, he says, but don't slobber over them. He often calls me a fool for being too sympathetic. Yet this very man, when a baby, was found abandoned on a doorstep; and but for the kind-hearted stranger who took him in, possibly we should never have had the benefit of his philosophy. Funny, isn't it? Yes, and sad too.

Tell me, then, what there is better than to have a heart for the troubles of others, and a hand at their service when they need it. Take a case like the following, for example. To be sure it is common-place enough, but what of that? Every pain has a million like it, every white-faced sufferer lying helpless on a bed is but one of a countless multitude of such, and the language of pain is always the simplest words that can issue from drawn and parched lips.

"For many years—even as a girl"—says this woman, "I have suffered from weakness, feeling languid and tired, never knowing what it was to feel properly well. After meals I had great pain at the chest and around the sides. I had also a gnawing pain at the pit of the stomach, which nothing relieved. I was constantly spitting

up a clear, sour fluid. I was in such agony that I groaned with the pain, and was a misery to myself and those around me. I was almost too weak to get about, and my life was a burden to me.

"In this weak and exhausted state I kept on year after year, sometimes feeling a little better and then bad as ever. I took different kinds of medicines, but nothing helped me. In July, 1894, a book was left at the house, and I read of a case like mine having been cured by Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I got a bottle of this medicine, and after taking it began to improve. I could enjoy my food and it caused me no pain, and I felt better than I had done for years.

"I continued with it, and got stronger and stronger. I have since kept well, taking an occasional dose of the medicine when needed. My husband, who suffered from liver complaint, has also taken Mother Seigel's Syrup with great benefit. You can publish this statement as you like, and refer anyone to me.—(Signed) (Mrs.) M. J. PHILBY, 33, Lilley Road, Castelnau, Barnes, London, July 17th, 1897."

In order to be short Mrs. Philby tells her story in as few words as she could. She merely touches on the main points and leaves the rest to our imagination. If she had remembered and set down all, or even a good part of, the painful and melancholy incidents in her lifetime of suffering, what a tale it must have been! Her disease was a prevailing one among women—chronic dyspepsia—coming upon her in childhood and growing worse as the weary years dragged by. No doubt she received plenty of pity, as such a case must needs excite it. But of all the mass of drugs she took none helped her, because none (up to the time she used Mother Seigel's Syrup) was adapted to her complaint. *That* cured her, for the reason that the woman who discovered and prepared it sympathised with her sex and employed this medicine successfully in their behalf long before it was made known to the world at large. And I prefer *her* precepts and example to the philosophy of my acquaintance—who is virtually a savage anyhow.

It is a good thing, therefore, to take note of the illnesses of our neighbours and let them know where a remedy is to be found.